

Knit a Traditional Orenburg Warm Shawl • Crochet a Lace Scarf

# PIECEWORK®

*Lace*  
6th Annual Issue

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Shetland Scarf  
to Knit

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# PIECEWORK.

Volume XXI Number 3

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*This column offers a collection of patterns, charts, and instructions that have been gleaned from vintage magazines and books that are no longer generally available. The patterns and instructions for these small needlework articles are worded exactly as they appeared in the original publication. Use them as they are or adapt them to other techniques—but do have fun with them!*



## Fuchsia-Design in Points or Edging

By Nellie H. Youngburg

Use any number of crochet-cotton, from 50 to 70. For upper petals, white, make an elongated ring of (5 double knots, 1 picot) 9 times, 5 double knots, close. Leave about one eighth inch of thread and make another elongated ring of 5 double knots, fasten in last picot of 1st ring, (5 double knots, 1 picot) 5 times, 5 double knots, close. Leave one eighth inch of thread and make an elongated ring of 5 double knots, fasten in last picot of ring just made, 5 double knots, fasten in next to last picot, (5 double knots, 1 picot) 4 times, 5 double knots, close. Leave one eighth inch of thread and make another large ring, elongated, of 5 double knots, fasten in last picot of ring just made, (5 double knots, 1 picot) 8 times, 5 double knots, close. Leave about 2 inches of thread and cut.

For lower petals: Wind bobbin with pink and fasten to loose thread of first white petal made, tie securely and cut ends. Make an elongated ring of (5 double knots, 1 picot) 7 times, 5 double knots, close. Fasten thread through between two center white rings under one eighth inch of thread between rings as you would through a picot. Then make another elongated ring of 5 double knots, fasten in last picot of ring just made, 5 double knots, fasten in next to last picot, (5 double knots, 1 picot) 5 times, 5 double knots, close.

Trish Faubion adapted the instructions for the tatted Fuchsia-Design in Points or Edging by Nellie H. Youngburg found in the November 1925 issue of *Needlecraft Magazine*. She used Presencia Finca Perle Cotton, size 12, #2720 Very Dark Lavender and #0001 White.

Photograph by Joe Coca.



Tie pink ball-thread securely to loose thread of white ring last made and cut ends. Make a chain of 5 double knots, fasten in 1st picot of large white ring, 5 double knots, fasten in second picot, (5 double knots, 1 picot) 3 times, 5 double knots, fasten through middle picot of pink ring, 4 double knots, 1 long picot, (1 double knot, 1 long picot) twice, 4 double knots, fasten through center picot of other pink ring, (5 double knots, 1 picot) 3 times, 5 double knots, fasten in next to last picot of large white ring, 5 double knots, fasten in last picot of ring, 5 double knots. Tie threads securely between 2 white rings and cut.

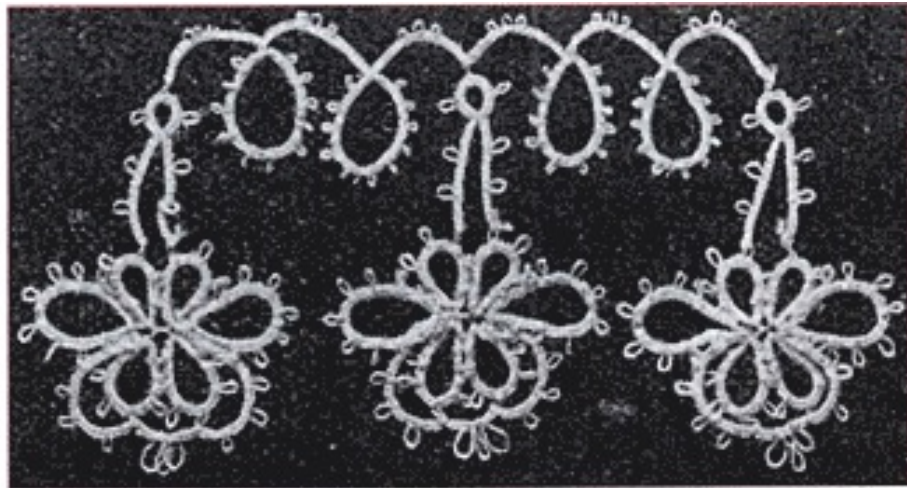
For the upper part of calyx: Fasten double thread, white, to first loose picot in center of one of inside white rings, and make a chain of (5 double knots, 1 picot) twice, 5 double knots. Then a small ring of (5 double knots, 1 picot) 3 times, 5 double knots, close. A chain of (5 double knots, 1 picot) twice, 5 double knots. Fasten threads through 1st loose picot toward center of other small elongated white ring and cut threads.

For the stems and leaves to center flower: Fasten double thread, white, through middle picot of ring in calyx of flower and make a chain of 10 double knots, 1 picot, 10 double knots. An elongated ring of (5 double knots, 1 picot) 5 times, 5 double knots, fasten to 7th picot of large petal of flower, (5 double knots, 1 picot) 5 times, 5 double knots, close. Repeat for other side.

For stems and leaves to lower flower: Fasten double thread, white, through center picot of ring in calyx of flower and make a chain of 10 double knots, 1 picot, 10 double knots. An elongated ring of (5 double knots, 1 picot) 11 times, 5 double knots, close. A chain of 10 double knots, fasten in center picot of pink petal of center flower, 10 double knots. Another leaf. A third chain fastening to center picot of large white petal for center flower. A third leaf. Tie and cut threads. When upper row is made, fasten long pink picot at bottom of flower to 3d from last picot of last leaf, with needle and thread or while making.

For the top row: Fasten double thread, white, through picot in ring at top of flower. Make a chain of 8 double knots, 1 picot, (2 double knots, 1 picot) twice, 8 double knots. \*A leaf (elongated ring) of (5 double knots, 1 picot) 11 times, 5 double knots, close. A chain of 8 double knots, 1 picot (2 double knots, 1 picot) twice, 8 double knots. Another leaf, fastening center picot to chain of 2d row. Another chain. Another ring, fastening center picot to picot of other chain. Another chain. Another ring. Another chain, fasten to another flower. Another chain. Repeat from \*.

—From the November 1925 issue of Needlecraft Magazine



The engraving for the tatted Edging from the November 1925 issue of Needlecraft Magazine.

You are invited to contribute a vintage pattern (1930s or earlier) for a small article or edging that you've found and made. Please email a clear image of the article or edging, a scan of the original instructions, and the source to [piecework@interweave.com](mailto:piecework@interweave.com) (please put Trimmings in the subject line) or mail a photograph of the piece, a photocopy of the original instructions, and the source to Trimmings, PieceWork, 201 E. Fourth St., Loveland, CO 80537-5655; please include a daytime telephone number.



# Granny Cheyne

## A Shetland Knitter in New Zealand

MARGARET STOVE

*In 2005, the owner of a damaged shawl asked Margaret Stove to restore the family heirloom as closely as possible to its original state. The shawl was likely more than 100 years old and had been knitted by "Granny Cheyne." Stove, who describes the restoration of the Cheyne Shawl in *Wrapped in Lace: Knitted Heirloom Designs from Around the World* (Loveland, Colorado: Interweave, 2010), here explores the history behind the shawl and its maker.*

—Editor

IN THIS AGE OF INSTANT COMMUNICATION and air travel, it is difficult to imagine how hard life must have been to prompt several thousand intrepid inhabitants of a group of tiny islands lying between Norway and Scotland—the Shetlands and Orkneys—to travel literally to the ends of the earth to settle in a similar island environment not far from the Antarctic continent. Their months-long journey would be fraught with hardship, and there was no guarantee that they would ever return.

Because many immigrants from Shetland were erroneously recorded as being Scottish, it is difficult to know who among them was the first to arrive in New Zealand. An Andrew Cheyne, the master of the brig *Bee*, is known to have called in to the far north of New Zealand in 1841. This Andrew could well have been a member of the family of Granny Cheyne's husband, also Andrew, who was born in Dunrossness, Shetland, in 1840.

In 1871, Sir Julius Vogel (1835–1899), who later became prime minister of New Zealand, introduced an assisted immigration scheme. This coincided with the land clearances in Shetland, and as the inhabitants of Shetland and Orkney were perceived to be best suited to settle on Stewart Island, an isolated and inhospitable location off the south coast of New Zealand, they were specifically invited by the provincial government to settle there. As

The view from  
Sumburgh  
Head at the  
southern tip of  
the Shetland  
mainland near  
Dunrossness,  
where Granny  
Cheyne married  
and lived before  
immigrating to  
New Zealand  
in 1874.

Photograph by  
Paula Fisher ©  
Shutterstock.





priority was given to farm laborers and carpenters, many of the male prospective immigrants, who were primarily fishermen, listed one of these as their occupation on their application for assistance. Women claimed to be domestic servants even though no one on Shetland at the time was in a position to employ domestic help.

Although grants of land, boats and lines, and provisions for six months had been provided, the settlement did not flourish. Writings of the time suggest that the new settlers, whose homeland had no trees and whose buildings thus were built exclusively of stone, lacked the skills for building houses of timber.

A planned fishing industry to provide smoked and dried fish for the goldfields in Victoria, Australia, also failed despite an abundance of fish in the sea, as the settlers found the waters of the Foveaux Strait, which separates Stewart Island from the rest of New Zealand, far too rough (the strait is notorious for changeable and extreme weather blowing up from Antarctica). Consequently, most settlers moved from Stewart Island to Invercargill near the South Island harbor of Bluff. It was to Invercargill that the spinner and knitter known as Granny Cheyne eventually arrived to join members of her family who had become established there earlier.

Margret Thomson, born in 1837, married Andrew Cheyne in Dunrossness in 1862, and in 1874, Margret, Andrew, and their three children, along with nineteen other family members, migrated to New Zealand on the *Jessie*

*Readman*. They arrived at Port Chalmers, Dunedin, on October 26 and then sailed on to Bluff on the *Koomerang*.

Margret and other family members brought their spinning wheels with them: Shetland wheels are held together with wooden pegs and can be dismantled easily. There is no record of their having brought wool. Because Andrew Cheyne gained employment as an inspector with the Invercargill City Council, Margret did not need to earn a livelihood like her grandmother, Granny Thomson, in Shetland, who had had to walk for miles to sell her knitting. In fact, there is no record that any of Margret's extended family in New Zealand sold their knitting; the shawls that they spun and knitted were all gifts for family and friends.

The wool that Margret used came from Woodlands Station, which had been established as a cattle run in 1858. Romney sheep were kept on the property in 1862, but feral Merino sheep grazed on adjacent lands. Malcolm Mouat (dates unknown), who bought Woodlands, used to put aside fine, blade-shorn fleece for his cousin Margret, who knitted him woolen spencers (a type of thermal underwear) and long johns, which were dyed pink. Her exquisite shawls were spun from these fleeces, as well.

The wool for the shawl that I repaired was spun in the Shetland yarn tradition for fine shawls: a two-ply worsted with little twist. Having had the opportunity to spin Shetland wool from a flock in Unst, one of the North Isles of the Shetlands, that provided fleece for fine shawls, I have



Mason Bay on Stewart Island's west coast near the Foveaux Strait, which separates the island from the South Island of New Zealand. It was here that Shetland immigrants fleeing the land clearances in their homeland in the 1870s first settled.

Photograph by folk  
© Shutterstock.



been able to compare that wool with fleece grown here in New Zealand. Fine crossbred wool crossed with Merino is similar indeed to the native Shetland wool, and it is understandable why Margret would have chosen it for her shawl. Although the designs that Margret used were traditional patterns from her homeland, I learned when working out the patterns for repairing the shawl that she had made adaptations to accommodate the number of stitches and rows in each element of the design, especially in the borders, so that they all worked in harmony.

Shetland lace patterns fit Mary Walker Phillips's definition of "creative lace" perfectly: They are excellent examples of using knitted lace (pattern every row resulting in a single thread between the holes), lace knitting (pattern on alternate rows resulting in two twisted threads between the holes), and eyelet lace (in which the holes are separated by knitted fabric). These variations give the knitter the freedom to make the elaborate designs that we see in these shawls.

The patterns depict the natural environment, but how they came about has been a puzzle that may never be re-

solved with certainty. In my travels and research in many countries, I have been intrigued by the many similarities in patterns wherever lace is knitted. Two points are of particular interest: The first is that early patterns were knitted by knitters "reading" the knitting itself, translating what they saw and not relying on pattern books. The second is that most of these knitting communities were associated with seafarers who no doubt would have brought home souvenirs or gifts of knitwear to wives and sweethearts, who in turn would have read and adapted the lace designs for their own use. I accept that most patterns could be arrived at independently; still, the Estonian Twig patterns and the Print of the Wave patterns of Shetland are so similar that I wonder if this is an example of a shared reading.

Granny Cheyne died in Invercargill in 1936, leaving a legacy of shawls whose complex patterning and exceptional workmanship are the equals of the best of the lace spun and knitted in Shetland. I regard it as a great privilege to have been involved in the restoration of one of them, and I hope that it now can be enjoyed by many more generations here in the Antipodes. ♦

## A Granny Cheyne Scarf to Knit

MARGARET STOVE

I adapted this scarf from patterns used in the border of the shawl Granny Cheyne made in the nineteenth century (see the preceding article). The scarf was knitted in Artisan Gossamer Lace Merino, a two-ply yarn available online from Holland Road Yarn Company. Two skeins are

required to make the scarf; a shorter cravat-size scarf may be made from one skein.

### INSTRUCTIONS

#### Scarf

With crochet thread, use the provisional method to CO 20 sts. Work Set-Up Row of Beginning Edging Chart. Work Rows 1–16 of Beginning Edging Chart 9 times. Work Row 1 of Corner Chart as foll: Work 19 sts in patt, pick up and k 72 sts along the straight edge of edging back to the provisional CO, unravel the crochet thread, and place the 19 sts onto the dpn, work in charted patt to end—110 sts. Work Rows 2–22 of Corner Chart—114 sts. Work Rows 1–114 of Body Chart once, then rep Rows 99–114 eleven more times—47 points total around edge; 9 along bottom edge, 1 at each corner, and 18 along each side. Place all sts on st holder.

Work a 2nd piece the same as the 1st and then graft the 2 pieces tog, matching the shapes of the patt. *Notes:* As the pieces are knitted in different directions, compromises

### MATERIALS

Artisan Gossamer Lace Merino, 100% merino wool yarn, laceweight, 547 yards (500.2 m)/18 gram (0.6 oz) skein, 2 skeins of Natural; <http://hollandroad yarn.co.nz>

Needles, size 0 (2 mm) or size needed to obtain gauge, and 1 double pointed, size 0 (2 mm), for grafting

Crochet thread, small amount for provisional cast-on

Stitch holder

Tapestry needle

Finished size: 48 inches (121.9 cm) long and 12 inches (30.5 cm) wide, after washing and blocking

Gauge: 38 sts and 56 rows = 4 inches (10.2 cm) in garter st, blocked

See page 62 for Abbreviations and Techniques

The charts for this project are available in PDF format at [pieceworkmagazine.com/Charts-Illustrations](http://pieceworkmagazine.com/Charts-Illustrations)





Margaret Stove's elegant Shetland lace scarf inspired by an original Shetland shawl knitted by Granny Cheyne after she immigrated to New Zealand.

*Photograph by Joe Coca.*



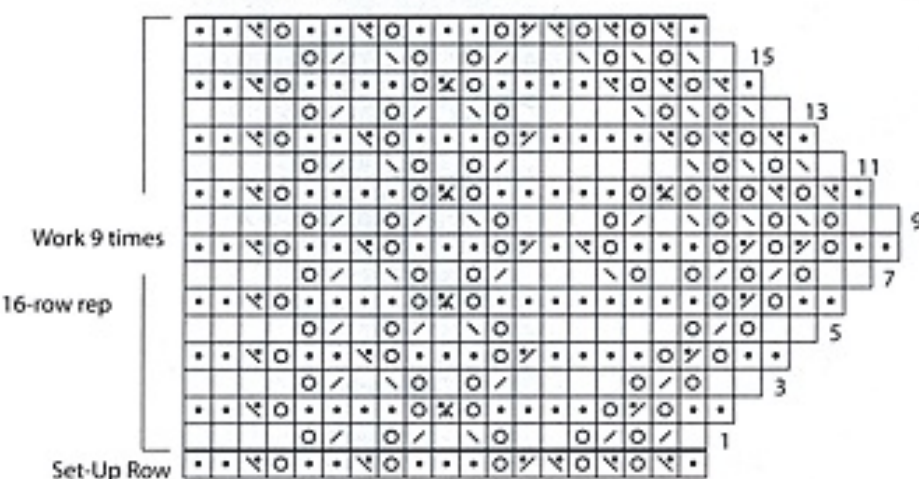
will need to be made while grafting the two pieces together. It is important to keep the garter stitch correct and to ensure the lace edges create the illusion of the pattern being continuous.

#### Finishing

Weave in ends. Wash gently by hand in hot water with pure soap or neutral wool wash. Rinse and pin out while wet with sufficient tension to open out the lace. Steam lightly and unpin when completely dry.

**ABOUT THE AUTHOR AND DESIGNER.** Margaret Stove lives in New Zealand and uses the skills that she has acquired in figuring out the structure of knitted lace to create new designs and, more recently, to conserve and restore heritage lace. This latter interest gives a new life to the creations of expert knitters of past generations and ensures that their work will continue to give pleasure. Her books *Creating Original Hand-knitted Lace* (Berkeley, California: Lacis, 1995) and *Wrapped in Lace* (Loveland, Colorado: Interweave, 2010) detail the results of her research in this area.

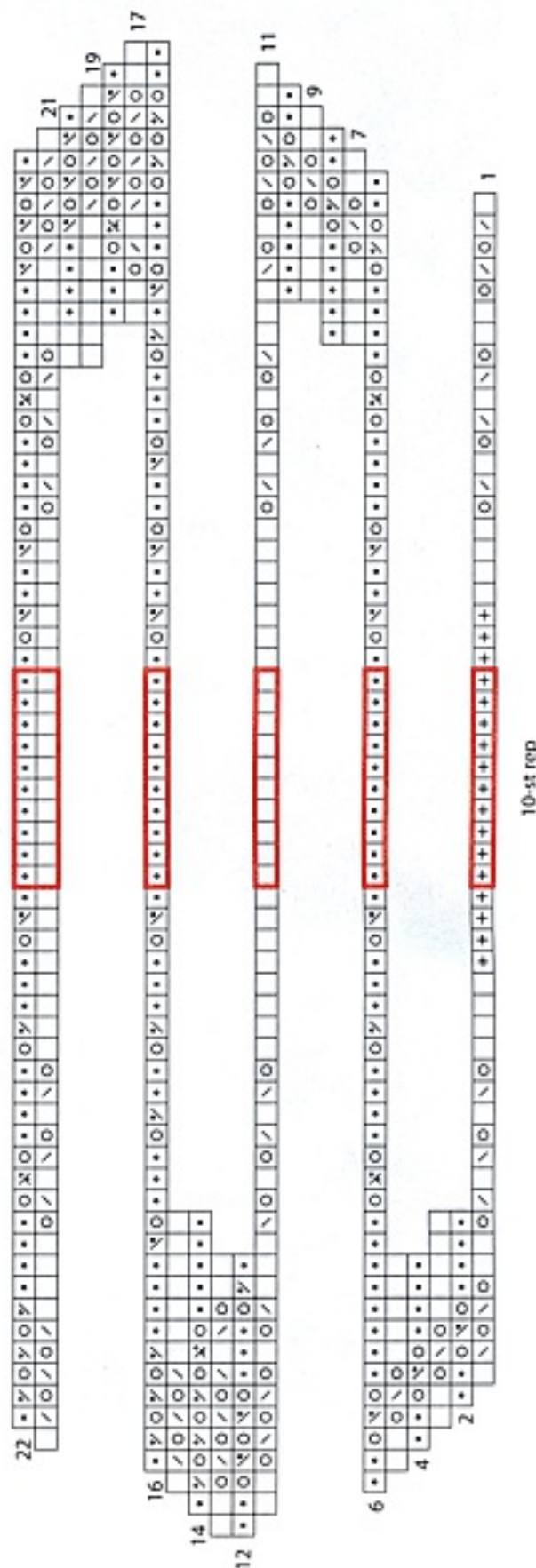
#### Beginning Edging



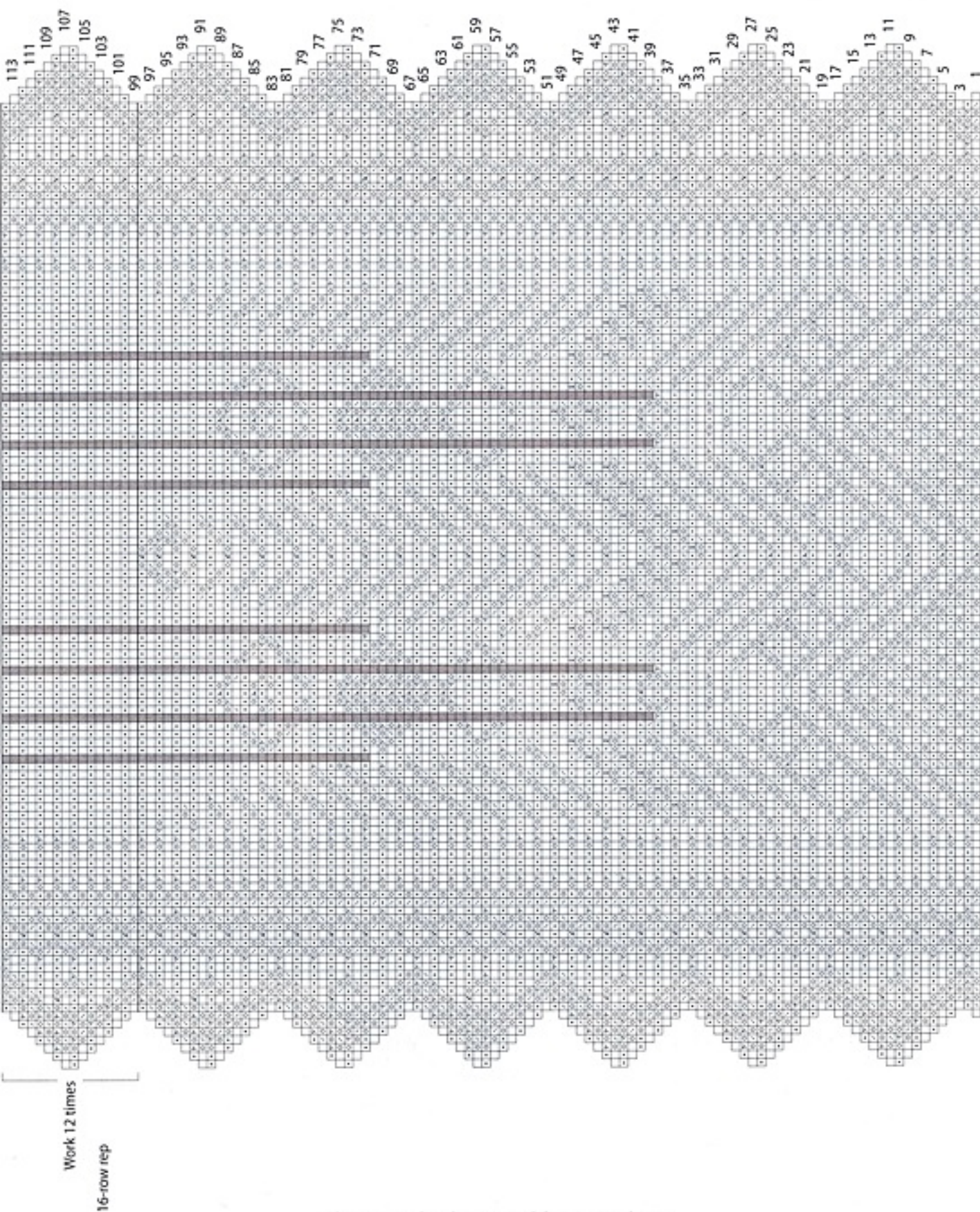
#### Key

- k on RS; p on WS
- p on RS; k on WS
- o yo
- k k1tbl
- / k2tog on RS
- \ ssk on RS
- / k2tog on WS
- \ ssk on WS
- λ sl 1, k2tog, pssso on RS
- λ sl 1, k2tog, pssso on WS
- λ k3tog on WS
- + pick up and k 1 st from straight edge of edging
- no st
- patt rep

#### Corner







*Charts may be photocopied for personal use.*



# Lily Mae Burley Patrick, MASTER TATTER

DELORES CHASE



**L**ILY MAE BURLEY, who would one day be my Grandma Patrick (we called her “Grandma Pat”), was born in 1889 near North Branch, Michigan; she lived to age ninety-two. She got her first job at age thirteen in a woolen mill. Too young to work there legally, she would hide under a pile of yarn or in a storeroom in the back if an inspector came around. She was proficient at running all of the machines.

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Lily Mae Burley, second from left, working in a Michigan woolen mill. Photographer unknown. Circa 1902.  
*Photograph courtesy of the author.*

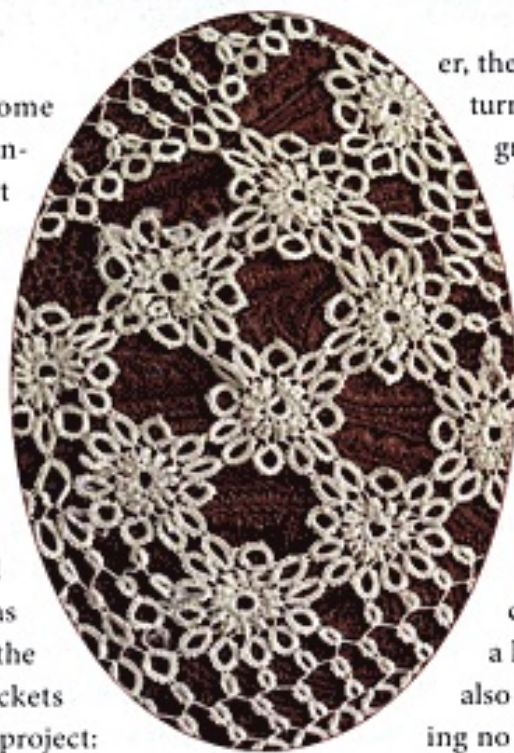


She worked at mills in Columbiaville and Yale. To go home for the weekend from her job in Yale, she would ride the stagecoach the 27 miles (43.4 km) to North Branch, where her father would meet her with a horse and wagon to take her the rest of the way home. She met her future husband, Walter Patrick, one weekend in North Branch while waiting for her father to pick her up.

In 1912, Lily Mae and Walter married. They had three daughters: my mother, Ruth, born in 1914, Virginia, born in 1916, and Verda June, born in 1919 after Grandpa Patrick's death from influenza on January 1 of that year. Verda June died at age one-and-a-half.

Although Lily Mae received some help from family members, she mainly had to fend for herself the best she could. As if life was not already rough enough, she soon lost her vision. Still, she managed to plant and harvest a garden, put up food for the winter, cut firewood, and raise her surviving children.

Lily Mae was well known in the community for her beautiful knitting, crocheting, and tatting; she had probably learned all of these skills as a young girl. I'll always remember the apron she used to wear, its big pockets filled with supplies for her current project:



a ball of thread or yarn, a tatting shuttle, a crochet hook, or knitting needles. She loved to make things for people, and it seems that she was always making mittens, doilies, tablecloths, or afghans for someone.

Many of the stories of Grandma Pat's younger years I learned from my mother or, more recently, from my eldest sister, Barbara, and my cousins. Once a woman asked Grandma to tat a tablecloth to her specifications, and they agreed on a price of \$75. Grandma finished the tablecloth, but the women did not pay her, and Grandma was left with the tablecloth. I believe that that tablecloth was passed

down first to my mother, then to Barbara, then to me. I gave it in turn to my daughter Candace, Lily's great-granddaughter. The tablecloth is round, measures more than 6½ feet (2 m) wide, and contains 1,998 medallions as well as many, many additional rings that form additional patterns.

I decided to check out the story that Grandma made each of her granddaughters a tatted tablecloth as a wedding present. Barbara, who married in 1957, has a tablecloth measuring about 48 inches (122 cm) square with many medallions and a lovely edging. My cousin Sharon had also received a square tablecloth, but having no daughters of her own, she gave it to

TOP: Round tablecloth tatted by Lily Mae Burley Patrick ("Grandma Pat"). More than 6½ feet (2 m) wide, containing 1,998 medallions. Collection of Candace Fulsher.

BOTTOM: Detail of the round tablecloth with 1,998 medallions tatted by Lily Mae Burley Patrick ("Grandma Pat"). Collection of Candace Fulsher. Photographs by Joe Coca.



her sister June's daughter Cherrie. June herself discovered two tatted tablecloths in a cedar chest. The larger one, round and measuring about 64 inches (163 cm) across, is much like the one that I gave my daughter. The smaller one is square and similar to Barbara's and Cherrie's. It is my theory that the round one probably belonged to June's mother, my Aunt Virginia, and that the square one was June's wedding gift in 1958.

In addition to the five tatted tablecloths that we have located to date, Grandma also made many, many doilies; at least one woman's crocheted dress, which June now has; and numerous beautiful crocheted children's dresses. A photograph shows my cousin Patrick wearing one of the crocheted dresses when he was young (he was embarrassed by the photograph later in life).

After Aunt Virginia married and had children, Grandma Pat lived with their family. Grandma would watch the children while their parents worked in the auto industry. Sometimes Grandma would visit our family for a few weeks during the summer. Later, with Virginia's children grown, Grandma moved in with us while I was still a teenager.

Oh, how I loved her! She loved to tell stories, laugh, and listen to our stories. She always kept her teapot nearby, along with her radio and her special phonograph on which she would play her Talking Books from the Library of Congress. Although she could read Braille, she much preferred listening to the recorded books. She also loved country music.

My mother, my sister Elaine, or I would read her the pattern directions for whichever project she was working on, and she would be good for hours. (My cousins had done the same thing when she lived with them.) As we read the pattern, Grandma was able to visualize the design and memorize it. If the pattern involved different



colors, she would mark all the thread or yarn of a given color with a different number of safety pins so that she could distinguish them in case a sighted person wasn't home when she was ready to change colors.

If it was time for the mail carrier, we would walk the quarter of a mile down the roadway to see if Grandma had received anything in the mail. Some days, it would be more Talking Books, a letter from family or friends, a catalog, or perhaps the latest issue of *Workbasket* magazine. We would sit down with her

and read letters, catalogs, and magazines to her. Grandma loved ordering new costume jewelry, long cotton stockings, or something else from the catalogs. We also would describe each of the projects in *Workbasket*, and she would decide if she wanted to try one of them.

Grandma developed dementia and had lost her ability to make the intricate tatted tablecloths by the time I married in 1968, but she was still able to make me a knitted afghan. (Years later, my mother would suffer from the same type of dementia.) While cleaning out my parents' house after both my grandmother and mother had died, we found at least 200 handkerchiefs, most of them with crocheted or tatted edgings, worked by Grandma Pat. Many were worn beyond usefulness, but after my siblings had taken what they wanted, I took the rest and made a patchwork-style throw pillow from some of the salvageable pieces with a fabric reproduction of Grandma and Grandpa's wedding photograph. Several of my children, siblings, and cousins liked it so much that they each requested a pillow of their own in memory of Grandma Pat.

I have always felt that when a person loses one of the senses, another sense is intensified. In Grandma's case, it was her sense of touch. Barbara struggled and struggled to learn how to knit as a teenager. If she made a mistake, she would take her knitting to Grandma, who would find

Square tablecloth tatted by Lily Mae Burley Patrick ("Grandma Pat"). Lily Mae and Walter Patrick's wedding photograph is displayed on the tablecloth. Collection of Leroy and Melissa Hall.

Photograph by and courtesy of the author.





Tablecloth  
tatted by  
Lily Mae  
Burley Patrick  
("Grandma Pat").  
About 64 inches  
(163 cm) in  
diameter.  
Collection of  
June Jones Gray.  
*Photograph by  
and courtesy  
of the author.*

the mistake by running her fingers over the work. Cousin Sharon told me that Grandma taught her to crochet and knit but that she never learned to tat because Grandma's fingers flew so fast that she never was able to see what they

were doing. I didn't learn to knit and crochet until after Grandma died, and I regretted that I had not learned the skills from her. ♦

## A Medallion to Tat

DELORES CHASE

I cannot say that I truly recognized my grandmother's talents until I signed up for a tatting class and brought in the tatted tablecloth (see preceding article) that now belongs to my daughter to show my classmates and my teacher, Betty Goetzeluck. My classmates were amazed by Grandma Pat's tablecloth; Betty pronounced it of museum quality and urged me to insure it.

Tatting has been my challenge. As I struggle to get my knots to go in place, I am in awe of my blind Grandma Pat, whom I often had watched

### MATERIALS

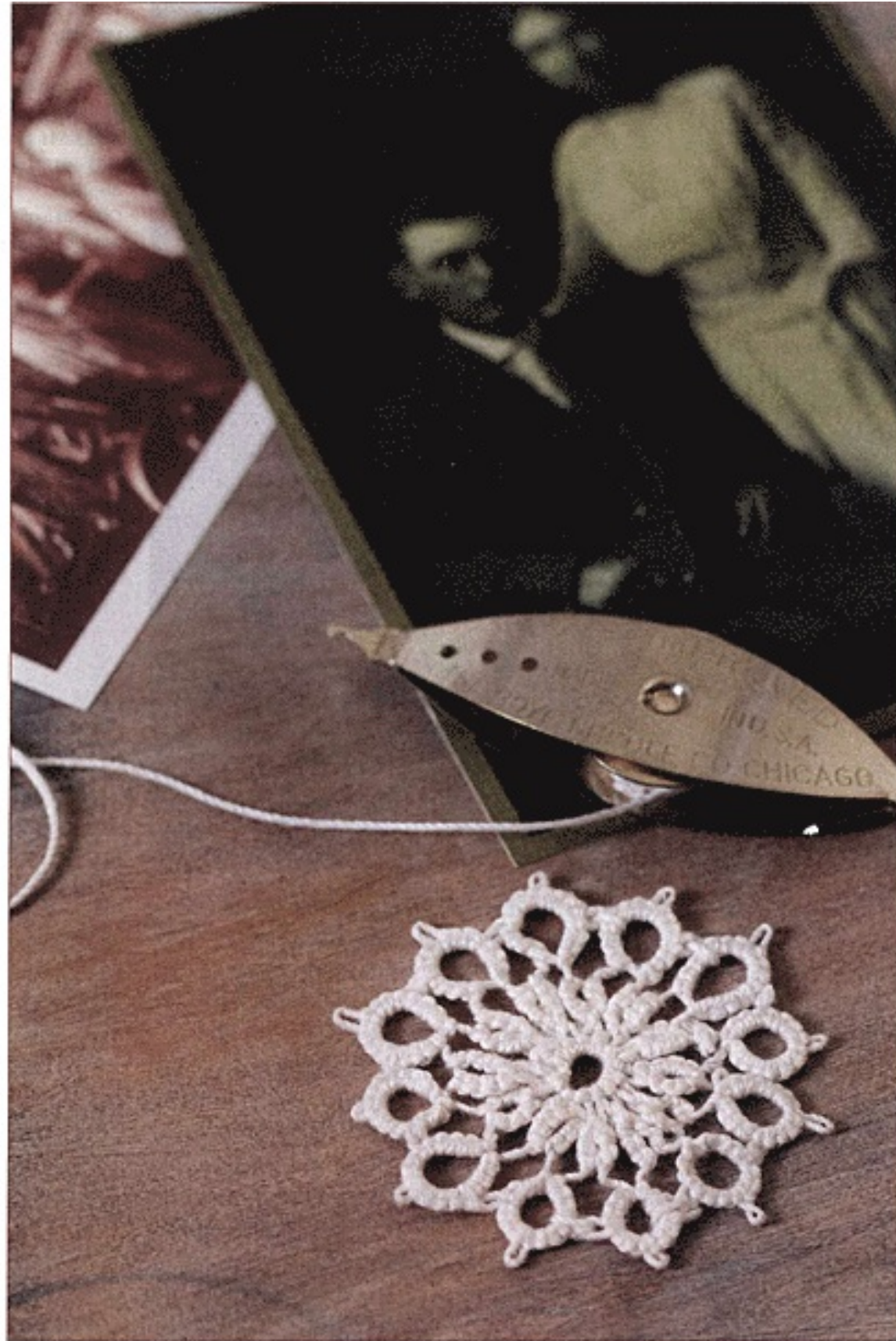
Aunt Lydia's Crochet Thread, 100% cotton thread, size 10, 400 yards (365.8 m)/ball, 1 ball of White; [www.coatsandclark.com](http://www.coatsandclark.com)  
Tatting shuttle

Finished size: 2 inches (5.1 cm) in diameter

### TATTING ABBREVIATIONS

R—ring  
RW—reverse work  
— [minus sign]—picot  
+—join  
Leave space— $\frac{1}{8}$  inch (3 mm) of bare thread





The tatted medallion made by the author. It was inspired by a motif in one of five tablecloths that Lily Mae Burley Patrick ("Grandma Pat") tatted long after she had lost her vision. The medallion is shown with a photograph of Lily Mae Burley and Walter Patrick on their wedding day in 1912 and Lily's tatting shuttle; the author used the shuttle to tat the medallion.

*Photograph by Joe Coca; wedding photograph courtesy of the author.*

while her shuttle flew back and forth so effortlessly, I have studied the medallions within the tablecloth, determined the sequence of the pattern, and tatted one medallion that comes very close to matching Grandma's work.

#### INSTRUCTIONS

##### Medallion

**Round 1 (Center):** R(1-1-1-1-1-1-1-1-1-1-1-1)—total of 12 picots. Cut thread and tie ends.

**Round 2:** Small R(4+4) with a picot on the center R. RW. Leave space. Large R(4-4-4-4). RW. Leave space. Small R(4+4) to next picot on the center R. RW. Leave space. \* Large R(4+4-4-4) to last picot on the previous large R. RW. Leave space. Small R(4+4) to next picot on the center R. RW. Leave space. Repeat from \* until all picots of the center R have a small R attached. On the last large R, work 4+(to last picot on previous large R)4-4+(to the 1st picot on the 1st large R)4. Close ring. Cut thread and tie ends together.

**ABOUT THE AUTHOR AND DESIGNER.** Delores Chase loves to crochet and enjoys reading, traveling, genealogy, attending church services, and serving on the board of Northeastern Michigan's Habitat for Humanity. She worked as a bank teller and a general office manager and retired in 2006 after twelve years as a rural mail carrier. She and her husband, Raymond, winter in Florida to escape Michigan's snow and cold.



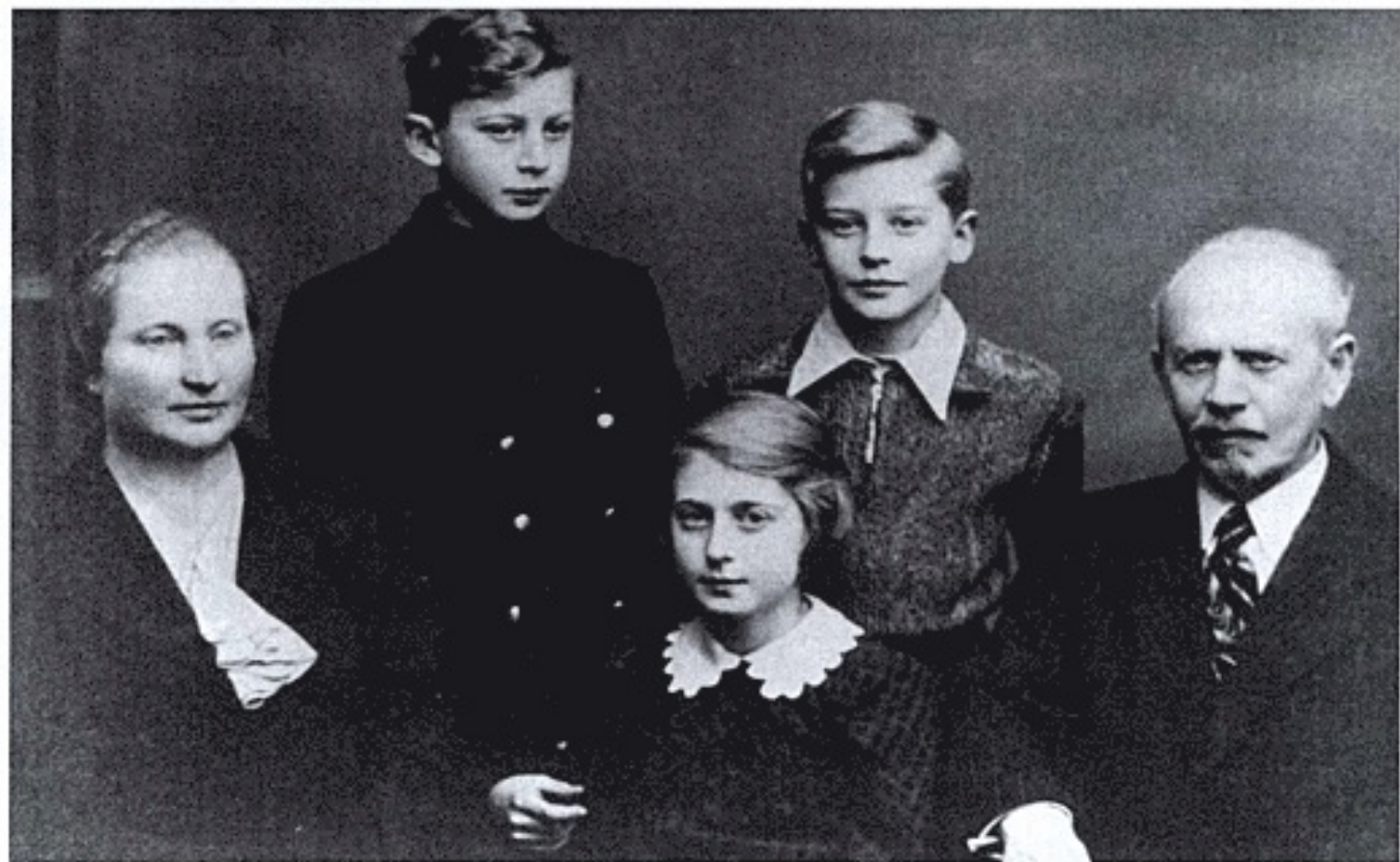
# Of Heroes, Hooks, and Heirlooms

FAYE SILTON

*"More than anything else, I want to be a hero. My parents are heroes because they survived Hitler's war and started a family all over again." So are the first thoughts of Mia, a Jewish girl in Faye Siltan's young-adult novel, Of Heroes, Hooks, and Heirlooms (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1997). As part of her class's Heritage Project, young Mia is asked to bring in old family photographs and a family heirloom to share with her classmates and their families. Only one photograph exists of Mia's family, which serves as a painful reminder to Mia's mother of the terrifying loss of her own mother and siblings and the life that was torn from her before coming to America. No heirlooms exist as nearly all possessions were taken from Mia's mother's family when the Nazis forced them to leave their home. With the help of a kind needlework shop owner, who shares her own family's tragic story of surviving famine in Ireland by crocheting and selling lace, Mia learns to crochet and hopes that she can crochet a collar just like the one her grandmother wears in the family's only remaining picture of her. The following is excerpted from Of Heroes, Hooks, and Heirlooms with permission.*

—Editor

I COULD CROCHET A LACE COLLAR, I could tell its story. . . . How Mutti [grandmother] cared enough to wear it just days before she was shot outside the ghetto, how it displayed her dignity to the last moment. Could I design a simple triangle to tie like a scarf at the neck? Could I keep the space even, the picots all the same size and leaning in the right direction?"



Faye Siltan's family, including her grandmother Rosa, seated at left, on whom the character Mutti in her novel *Of Heroes, Hooks, and Heirlooms* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1997) is based. Siltan's family was deported from Stettin, Germany, to Poland on October 28, 1938, and scattered to various places. Her uncle, at back left, celebrated his bar mitzvah in a small synagogue in Radom, Poland, in June 1939 with this small segment of the family. After that day, he and Faye's mother never saw their parents again.

*Photograph courtesy of the author.*



Weeks later, at her school's Heirloom Fair, Mia reveals her crocheted lace collar and herself as a true hero.

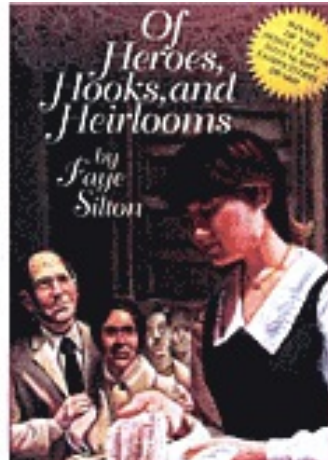
"Some of you know that I was very nervous about tonight because I thought our family had no heirlooms. In the end, I could have brought so much. I could have sung table songs that our family has been collecting for generations. I could have told you about our calendar, so full of holidays and special occasions, and about how good and strong our family is.

"Someday maybe our family will be able to remember happy things, funny things that happened before the war. Someday, when it doesn't hurt so much to remember."

Then I opened the flat box lined with tissue paper.

"This is what I finally chose. I made this lace collar to match the one my grandmother wore in the last and only photo we have of her. In the photo it is difficult to see, but I think it must have looked something like this.

"You must be thinking that I have not really fulfilled the assignment. After all, you can't just manufacture an heirloom on the spot, although heirlooms have to start somewhere. They have to be handed down.



"So let me explain. My grandmother was deported from her home and became a refugee on the run, still she managed to change her collar for the Sabbath of my uncle's Bar Mitzvah, only a short time before she and her children were shot. To me, her collar represents dignity and the will and courage she mustered to celebrate. Every time I glance at the photo, it is a sparkling lesson of how we need to stand proud.

"Mostly, though, I made this for my mother. She misses them all so much—her whole family—and wants something to be left that she can touch and hold."

When I hold up the lace triangle, the crowd was reaching for handkerchiefs. Mom and Dad held tight to each other.

I tied it around my neck.

"This is how my grandmother wore it on that last Sabbath of her life—we know that from the photo snapped moments before her son's Bar Mitzvah, in a strange synagogue, miles away from her home."

I touch the scarf around my neck. "When I wear this, I feel Mutti's—my grandmother's—strength and dignity and courage. I guess it works like an heirloom." ♦

Cover of Faye Siltou's novel *Of Heroes, Hooks, and Heirlooms* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1997). Courtesy of the Jewish Publication Society.

## Mia's Lace Collar to Crochet

FAYE SILTON

What can be done when an heirloom is required for a school-wide Heritage Fair but none has survived a terrible war? That is Mia's immediate quandary (among many other profound challenges) in my book *Of Heroes, Hooks, and Heirlooms* (see the preceding excerpt). Mia carefully inspects the only surviving photograph of her mother's family and concludes that a lace collar is tucked into the suit of the woman who would have been her grandmother. She decides to learn to crochet and to reproduce this collar as best she can. Will she master the craft and finish in time? Can a newly manufactured textile qualify as an heirloom? Most worrisome of all, will her mother, who suffers the loss of her dear family so acutely, feel renewed pain?

Here is the collar that is a fiction in the book, simple enough, though that twelve-year-old Mia could actu-

ally have completed it and soft enough that it could warm the heart of a family member who would be honored to wear it. The color that Malabrigo Yarn calls "Damask" is

### MATERIALS

Malabrigo Lace, 100% baby merino wool yarn, 470 yards (429.8 m)/1.75 ounce (49.6 g) hank, 1 hank of #130 Damask; [www.malabrigoyarn.com](http://www.malabrigoyarn.com)

Crochet hook, size E (3.50 mm) or size needed to obtain gauge

Finished size: 44 inches wide (111.8 cm) across the widest part; 15 inches (38.1 cm) long from center of top edge to the tip of the triangle

Gauge: 9 ch-sps and 9 rows = 4 inches (10.2 cm) in Shell patt

See below and page 62 for Abbreviations and Techniques

### SPECIAL STITCHES

Shell: (2 tr, ch 1, 2 tr) in ch-1 sp.

Dc Shell: (2 dc, ch 1, 2 dc) in ch-1 sp.



Inspired by the characters and events in her novel *Of Heroes, Hooks, and Heirlooms* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1997), Faye Siltan's crocheted-lace triangle collar will be the perfect addition to your own heirloom collection.

Photograph by Joe Coca. Crochet hook courtesy of the Loveland Museum/Gallery, Loveland, Colorado.

really a dusty rose—in memory of my own grandmother, Rosa, whom I never met.

#### INSTRUCTIONS

**Notes:** The work begins at center back neck. Increases are worked on either side of the center back point. The shell stitch, which forms the increases, is worked in treble stitches through Row 4, then changes to double-crochet stitches, beginning with Row 5 to the end.

#### Collar

**Row 1:** Beg at back neck, ch 7, 2 tr in 7th ch from hook (beg ch counts as tr, ch 1 throughout), (ch 1, 2 tr in same ch) 3 times, ch 1, tr in same ch, turn—5 ch-1 sps.

**Note:** From now on, the last chain-one space to be worked is the space formed by the turning chain of the previous row.

**Row 2:** Ch 7, 2 tr in 1st ch-1 sp, ch 1, [shell in next ch-1 sp, ch 1, 2 tr in next ch-1 space, ch 1] 2 times, tr in 6th ch of tch, turn—8 ch-1 sps.

**Row 3:** Ch 7, [2 tr in next ch-1 sp, ch 1] 3 times, [shell in next ch-1 sp, ch 1] 2 times, [2 tr in next ch-1 sp, ch 1] 3 times, tr in 6th ch of tch, turn—11 ch-1 sps.

**Row 4:** Ch 7, [2 tr in next ch-1 sp, ch 1] 4 times, shell in next ch-1 sp, ch 1, 2 tr in next ch-1 sp, ch 1, shell in next ch-1 sp, ch 1, [2 tr in next ch-1 sp, ch 1] 4 times, tr in 6th ch of tch, turn—14 ch-1 sps.

**Row 5:** Ch 7, [2 tr in next ch-1 sp, ch 1] 6 times, [dc shell in next ch-1 sp, ch 1] 2 times, [2 tr in next ch-1 sp, ch 1] 6 times, tr in 6th ch of tch, turn—17 ch-1 sps.

**Row 6:** Ch 7, \*2 tr in next ch-1 sp, ch 1\*\*; rep from \* to 1 ch-1 sp before the center ch-1 sp, dc shell in next ch-1 sp, ch 1, 2 dc in center ch-1 sp, ch 1, dc shell in next ch-1 sp, ch 1, rep from \* to \*\* across, tr in 6th ch of tch, turn—20 ch-1 sps.

**Row 7:** Ch 7, \*2 tr in next ch-1 sp, ch 1\*\*; rep from \* to ch-1 sp before center 2-dc, [dc shell in next ch-1 sp, ch 1] 2 times, rep from \* to \*\* across, tr in 6th ch of tch, turn—23 ch-1 sps.

Rep Rows 6 and 7 until there are a total of 33 rows from beg or piece is desired size. Do not cut yarn.



#### Picot loop edging,

**Row 1:** Working toward bottom point of collar, ch 1, sc in 1st st, \*ch 5, sk 4 sts, sc in next st; rep from \* around point to opposite upper corner forming lps along bottom edges of the collar. Do not turn.

**Row 2:** Beg across top edge of collar, ch 1, (3 sc, ch 3, sl st into 3rd ch from hook, 3 sc) in side edge of each tr across and in each ch-5 sp around rem edges of collar to work a picot in each lp, sl st in 1st sc to join. Fasten off.

#### Finishing

Gently wet block on a towel, straightening all picots. Allow to dry thoroughly.

**ABOUT THE AUTHOR AND DESIGNER.** Faye Siltan has "needle-worked" through a multifaceted career that has included teaching, school supervision, and writing and directing cultural activities for the elderly. She especially has enjoyed designing projects for her twenty-two grandchildren and loves to see tension melt away as they lose themselves in the joy of combining technique, texture, and color. The crochet hook is her favorite creative tool.



# Lisl Schuhmann's Lace TABLECLOTH

ELLEN ROTHSCHILD-TAUBE

**T**HE WIFE OF MY GRANDMOTHER'S COUSIN, Lisl Schuhmann (1912–2009), up from Florida to celebrate her ninetieth birthday with her extended family in New York, gazed happily at the stunning lace tablecloth on my dining-room table. Lavishly embellished with cutwork, embroidery, and needle lace, the



Ellen Rothschild-Taube's heirloom lace tablecloth that the wife of her grandmother's cousin, Lisl Schuhmann, brought with her to New York when she fled Germany in 1938. Cutwork, embroidery, needle lace. Cotton. About 12 feet x 5 feet (4 m x 1 m). Photograph by Joe Coca.



tablecloth had been in her family for as long as she could remember, and she often had described for me the large parties that her parents used to give in their home in Hamburg, Germany, and the grand table with this tablecloth on it. Knowing that I love family heirlooms, and having no children or grandchildren of her own, Lisl had given the tablecloth to me a few years earlier.

Lisl Schuhmann with her father in Hamburg, Germany. Photographer and date unknown. Photograph courtesy of the author.



Lisl's father was a milliner, and she remembered seeing the streets littered with the smashed equipment and many hats from his factory following Kristallnacht (the Night of Broken Glass, November 9–10, 1938, in which the Nazis wreaked destruction on Jewish property throughout Germany and parts of Austria). Her brother, Fred Wolf, had been sent to London shortly before Kristallnacht; shortly after, Lisl was sent to New York. Their parents never made it out of Germany and were killed in the concentration camps.

Arriving in New York with the family tablecloth but with very little money, Lisl stayed with some family acquaintances and cousins. While working as a nanny for the little daughter of comedian Milton Berle, she noticed that a van arrived regularly to pick up dirty laundry. Learning that it was a diaper service, Lisl offered to wash the diapers herself for less than the service was charging. A few years after she arrived in New York, Lisl and her brother were reunited when he came to New York. She



met and married Fredel Schuhmann, my grandmother's cousin, in 1948.

Lisl loved her family and wanted the important "pieces" in her life to stay in the family to be used and enjoyed. Through her lace tablecloth, Lisl's memory lives on in our family. ♦

**ABOUT THE AUTHOR.** Ellen Rothschild-Taube's parents both fled Germany in the late 1930s. After having worked in New York advertising agencies for several years, she and her husband now own two businesses that provide document scanning, workflow automation, and cloud-document management services to companies and nonprofit organizations. She lives in Westchester County, New York, and enjoys volunteering and spending time with her two grown children.



# An Orenburg Warm Shawl to Knit

GALINA A. KHMELEVA

For a Russian woman of middle age, perhaps the most coveted luxury gift would be an Orenburg warm shawl, often referred to in Russia as a "Russian mink coat." The unique thermal properties of Orenburg down not only keep its wearer warm and cozy during harsh winter weather but may, some believe, have distinct therapeutic value as well.



LEFT: The woman on the right is wearing an Orenburg warm shawl. Diveevo, Russia. 2012.

*Photograph by Nadezda Denisova and courtesy of the designer.*



RIGHT: The brown Orenburg warm shawl Galina A. Khmeleva purchased for her mother in 1991. This became one of her mother's prized possessions.

*Photograph by Joe Coca.*





Wrap yourself or someone you love in this stunning Orenburg warm shawl. Galina A. Khmeleva chose luxurious cashmere yarn for this project, a fitting choice for what will surely become a family heirloom.  
*Photograph by Joe Coca.*



For most of her life, my mother, Olimpiada Khmeleva, considered these claims as just a fairy-tale for peasant women. She prided herself on being a city girl whose perception of elegance and haute couture didn't include heavy Orenburg shawls, and she never missed an opportunity to criticize the owner of one. Only much later did I come to realize that Mother's attitude was born of simple envy.

On a visit to Orenburg in 1991, I took a risk and purchased a lovely warm shawl as a gift for my mother. Back home in St. Petersburg, I presented it to her and was stunned by her instantaneous reaction: She stormed into her bedroom and slammed the door.

She emerged a half hour later with the unmistakable red cheeks and puffy eyes of someone who has been crying. It became almost painfully obvious that her earlier apparent disdain for warm shawls had been pure bravado. In reality, she was deeply touched by my thoughtfulness.

I hope that you will enjoy knitting your own warm shawl, whoever will be the recipient. It is a labor of love that took me about 230 hours to complete. In the border, I used three basic



5 inc'd to 60 sts

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Orenburg elements: diagonals (*kosoryadki* in Russian), peas (*gorokh*), and honeycomb (*sotki*). In the second segment in the connection between the border and the body of the shawl, I used diagonals and peas. On the center section of the body, I used diagonals with a single pea element in the center.

# INSTRUCTIONS

**Notes:** All four borders are two-segment borders. The first segment is worked as a straight piece. The second segment is picked up perpendicular along the first segment. Slip the first stitch of each row (unless binding off) purlwise with yarn in front. Join all four borders together with right side facing you so that all teeth will face in the same direction.

## Shawl

Border Section 1 (make 4),

Using the long-tail method and 2 needles held tog, CO 5 sts. Remove 1 needle. Work Rows 1–112 of Border Increase Chart—61 sts. Work Rows 1–36 of Border Section 1 Chart 11 times as foll: On 56 Main Border sts, work Rows 1–36 of chart 11 times, on 5–9 Teeth sts, work Rows 1–10 of chart 37 times then work Rows 11–36. Work Rows 1–113 of Border Decrease Chart—8 sts rem; 62 total teeth on RS of border. BO all rem sts.

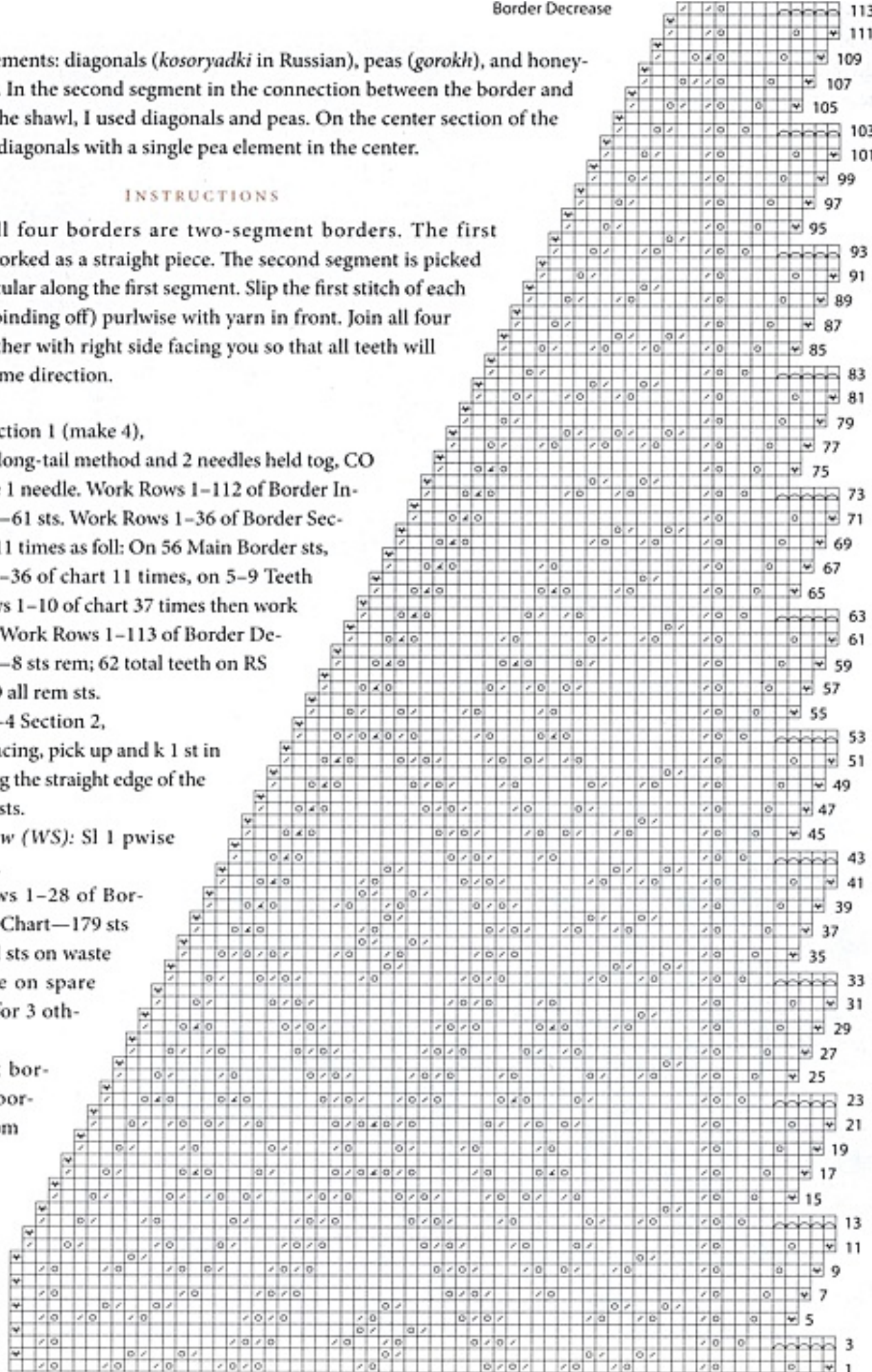
Borders 1–4 Section 2,

With RS facing, pick up and k 1 st in each sl st along the straight edge of the border—207 sts.

**Set-up Row (WS):** Sl 1 pwise wyf, k to end.

Work Rows 1–28 of Border Section 2 Chart—179 sts rem. Place all sts on waste yarn or leave on spare needle. Rep for 3 other borders.

Join right border and left border with bottom border,

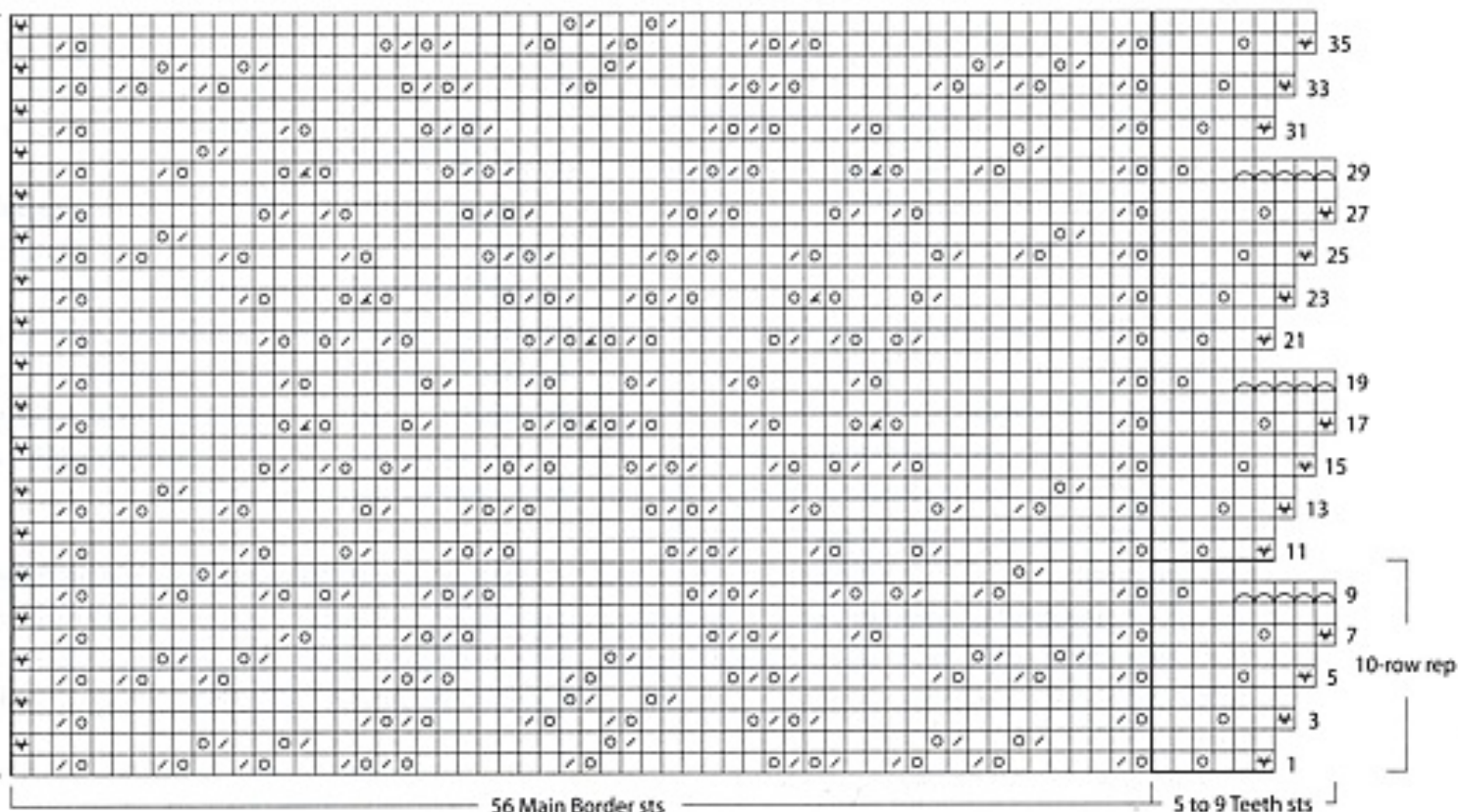


65 dec'd to 7 sts

Charts may be photocopied for personal use.



k 11 times



### MATERIALS

Belisa-Fine Australian Cashmere, 100% cashmere yarn, laceweight, 1,000 yards (914.4 m)/100 gram (3.5 oz) cone, 3 cones of Gray; [www.skaskka.com](http://www.skaskka.com)

Addi Turbo Lace Needles, 3 circular 32 inches (81.3 cm), size 2½ (3.0 mm) or size needed to obtain gauge; [www.skacelknitting.com](http://www.skacelknitting.com); set of 2 double pointed, size 2½ (3.0 mm) for border sections, optional

Tapestry needle

Crochet hook

Safety pins

Waste yarn or extra circular needles for stitch holders

Nylon cord and T-pins or blocking wires

Finished size: About 60 inches (152 cm) wide and 60 inches (152 cm) tall

Gauge: 22 sts and 44 rows = 4 inches (10.2 cm) in body patt

See below and page 62 for Abbreviations and Techniques

The charts for this project are available in PDF format at [pieceworkmagazine.com/Charts-Illustrations](http://pieceworkmagazine.com/Charts-Illustrations)

### SPECIAL TECHNIQUES

Russian Bind-Off: \*P2tog and sl new st to left-hand needle; rep from \* to end.

Russian Grafting Method: Sl 1st st on left-hand needle to right-hand needle, pass 2nd st on right-hand needle over 1st st and drop off needle, \*sl 1st st on right-hand needle to left-hand needle, insert tip of right-hand needle through 1st st pwise and then through 2nd st kwise, drawing the 2nd st through 1st, then drop 1st st off needle, sl 1st st on left-hand needle to right-hand needle, insert tip of left-hand needle through 1st st pwise and through 2nd st kwise, drawing 2nd st through 1st st, then drop 1st st off needle; rep from \* until 1 st rem.



With separate needles and RS facing, pick up 66 sts total (51 sts along Section 1 and 15 sts along Section 2) along diagonal edges of each border. Graft sts tog using Russian grafting method, beg at Section 2 and working toward the outer (CO and BO) edge of Section 1. Secure last st with safety pin. Tie tog the ends of the CO and BO and sew tog gap that is created. Use same ends to secure last grafting st that is on the safety pin.

Body,

*Note:* To join side stitches to body, knit the last body stitch together with the next side stitch and return stitch to left-hand needle, turn.

There are 179 sts each on bottom borders and each side border. Transfer bottom border sts to cir needle and each side border sts to separate cir needles. With RS facing, join yarn to right edge of bottom border sts. Work Rows 1–34 of Body Chart, then rep Rows 11–34 thirteen more times, then work Rows 35–46, joining body to sides with k2tog at end of every row—179 sts rem; all side sts joined to body.

Join top border with live sts from body,

Transfer 179 top border sts to new cir needle. Each needle now has 179 sts. With RS facing, graft sts tog as foll: \*Sl

next st from right-hand needle to left-hand needle, k2tog loosely and place resulting st on left-hand needle, sl next st from right-hand needle to left-hand needle and k3tog; rep from \* to end. This will create a more elastic join.

Join diagonal sides of top border with diagonal sides of right and left borders,

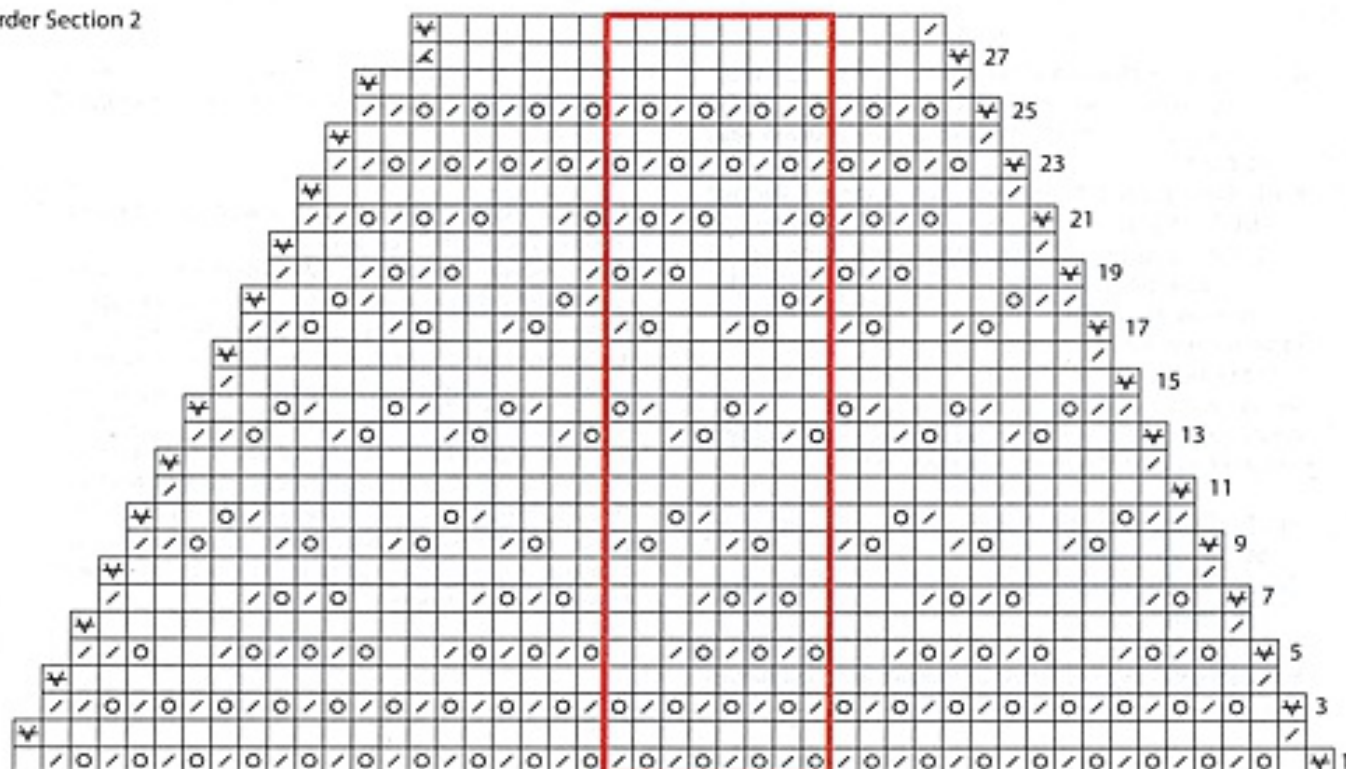
With separate needles and RS facing, pick up and k 66 sts total (51 sts along Section 1 and 15 sts along Section 2) along diagonal edges of each border. Graft sts tog using Russian grafting method, beg at Section 2 and working toward the outer (CO and BO) edge of Section 1. Secure last st with safety pin. Tie tog the ends of the CO and BO and sew tog gap that is created. Use same ends to secure last grafting st that is on the safety pin.

### Finishing

Weave in ends using the crochet hook or tapestry needle. Use nylon cord and t-pins or alternative blocking wires to block. The shawl does not need to be stretched as tightly as a gossamer shawl during blocking method.

**ABOUT THE DESIGNER.** Galina A. Khmeleva of Fort Collins, Colorado, is the owner of Skaska Designs and a frequent contributor to PieceWork. She has been teaching the art of Orenburg lace-making to U.S. knitters since 1996. Visit her website at [www.skaska.com](http://www.skaska.com).

Border Section 2




8-st rep




Key


 k on RS and WS


 yo

 k2tog

 sl 1 pwise wyf

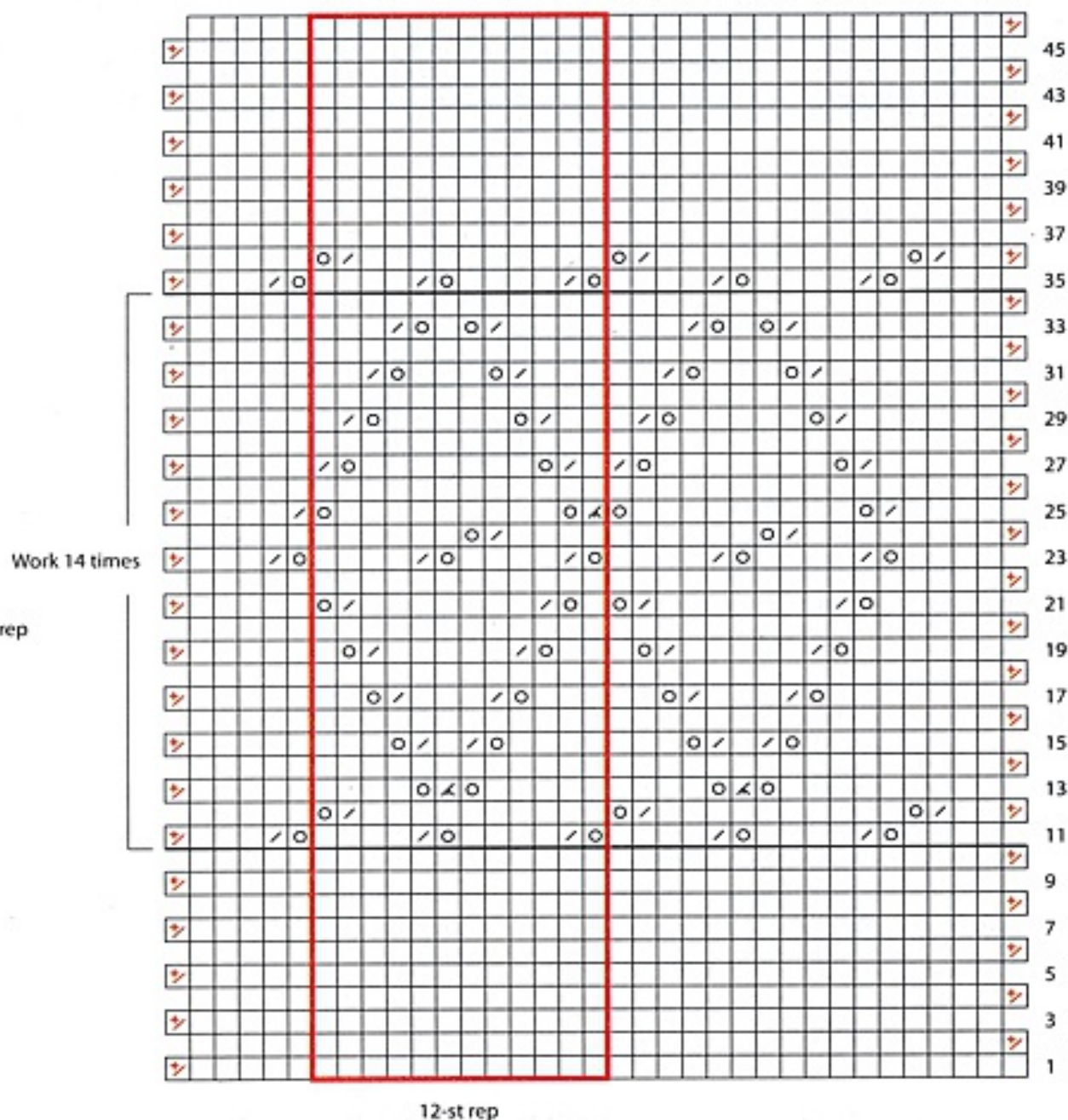
 k3tog

 BO 1 st

 k last body st tog with next side st and return st to left needle

 patt rep

Body





# Spinsters, Free Maids, Tells, and Shakespeare

CHRISTOPHER JOHN BROOKE PHILLIPS



**S**HAKESPEARE'S *TWELFTH NIGHT* is a play of swapped identities first performed in 1602 but set in ancient Illyria (an area of eastern Europe comprising parts of modern-day Albania, Croatia, and Montenegro). In Act II, Scene 4, Orsino, Duke of Illyria, describes a song sung to him the previous evening:

The spinsters and knitters in the sun  
And free maids that weave their thread with bones  
Do use to chant it: it is a silly sooth,  
And dallies with the innocence of love,  
Like the old age.

Clearly, spinsters, knitters, and free maids—and their chants—were familiar to both the playwright and his audience. Spinsters referred to anyone, man or woman, who spun yarn. Free maids were lacemakers, who were predominantly female. Bones referred either to bobbins turned and carved from beef shinbones or to fish bones or other small sharp bones with heads fashioned from sealing wax that those who could not afford handmade metal pins at one old British penny each used when making bobbin lace. (A common name for bobbin lace was bone lace.)

In the commercial production of lace, speed was paramount. Many lacemakers were children, some as young as seven or eight years old. To hold their attention and keep them working, designs were formed and pins placed by rote; chants, or tells, such as the following examples, helped to establish a rhythm:

Needlepin, needlepin, stitch upon stitch,  
Work the old lady out of the ditch,  
If she is not out as soon as I,  
A rap on the knuckles will come by and by,  
A horse to carry my lady about,  
I must not look off until twenty are out.

The “lady” is the lace pillow; the “horse,” the pillow stand; and a “rap on the knuckles” was what you got for not keeping up.

One, two,  
Buckle my shoe;  
Three, four,  
Shut the door;  
Five, six,  
Pick up sticks;  
Seven, eight,  
Lay them straight;  
Nine, ten,  
A big fat hen;  
Eleven, twelve,

ABOVE: Pricking for an Aragon-style lace edging. Collection of Diana Smith, Rothwell, Northamptonshire.  
*Photograph courtesy of the author.*



Dig and delve;  
Thirteen, fourteen,  
Maids a-courting;  
Fifteen, sixteen,  
Maids in the kitchen;  
Seventeen, eighteen,  
Maids a-waiting  
Nineteen, twenty,  
My plate's empty.

"Pick up sticks" and "Lay them straight" describe the movement of the bobbins, "A big fat hen" is the lace pillow. The verse beginning "Eleven, twelve . . ." is believed to be a social comment regarding the status of women but may also be a veiled comment on the status of lacemakers. (This rhyme was also heard in Ipswich, Massachusetts, where lace for the markets in Boston and Portsmouth, New Hampshire, was being produced in the late eighteenth century.)

"Jack Be Nimble" also has a lacemaking connection. Candle leaping stemmed from a game of jumping over fires, part of the old pagan traditions during May Day celebrations. The dangers were self-evident, and the game eventually was banned. In Wendover, Buckinghamshire, where there were many lacemaking schools, it was customary to dance around the lacemakers' candlestick at Candlemas; the practice led to jumping over the candlestick without dousing the flame, the goal being to ensure good luck for the year. Not so easy when wearing long skirts and pinafores!

In the evenings in most lacemaking communities, as many as eighteen girls worked by the light of a single tall-candle. In the middle of the room stood a candle stool or pole-board. The pole-board had four or six holes in a circle around one in the center; in the center hole was a long stick with a socket for the candle. The other holes held bulbous bottles made of very thin glass. When these bottles were filled with water, they magnified the light of the candle. The most skilled lacemakers got to sit nearest

the light, and so on in order of merit.

Before the 1550s, bobbin lace came to England primarily from Venice and subsequently from France, Spain, and the Spanish Netherlands (Flanders). Queen Catherine of Aragon (1485–1536), first wife of Henry VIII (1491–1547), may have introduced bobbin lacemaking to England. Confined at Ampthill in Bedfordshire from 1531 to 1533 while awaiting divorce from Henry, she is credited with teaching local women the art of bobbin lace to help relieve rural poverty. Although there is no proof that Catherine knew how to make bobbin lace herself or that she would have consorted directly with the poor, it is possible that members of her retinue were lacemakers and that she instructed them to pass on their skills. Rumors abounded that Catherine burnt her own lace while at Ampthill, creating the opportunity for the newly initiated lacemakers to make replacements.

English lacemaking history through the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries is well documented. Throughout France and the Low Countries, religious conflict regularly erupted between Huguenot Protestants and Catholics. Waves of Protestant refugees

fled, many crossing the English Channel to the ports of Dover, Deal, and Sandwich, where they spread out to settle in London and other areas. Many lacemakers from Flanders and northern France eventually settled in the East Midlands, possibly attracted by a local supply of flax and/or an already established lacemaking tradition.

By the end of the sixteenth century, lacemaking involved thousands of workers and formed a major component of the English economy. It is easy to understand that the lure of extra income and massive demand fueled a desire to increase output. "Schools" grew up in the towns, villages, and hamlets, ostensibly for the improvement of poor children but primarily for the teaching of lacemaking skills.



TOP: Lace filling in the Aragon style by Mrs. Dunkley, showing the label with the price and length indicated. Collection of Diana Smith, Rothwell, Northamptonshire.

BOTTOM: Lace worked in a variation of the Aragon style. Maker unknown. Collection of Diana Smith, Rothwell, Northamptonshire.

Photographs courtesy of the author.





## Early English Lace

One of the earliest records of English-made lace is in a letter from Elizabeth Isham of Lamport Hall, Northamptonshire, written to her father about 1630. Attached to the letter are five small samples of lace with their individual prices penned alongside, from 4 to 10 old pence (2½ to 6 cents) per yard (0.9 m).

—C. J. B. P.

The letter that Elizabeth Isham wrote to her father with lace samples and their prices affixed. Circa 1630. Collection of the Lamport Hall Preservation Trust, Northamptonshire, England.

Reproduced with the kind permission of the Trustees of Lamport Hall Preservation Trust, Northamptonshire, and the Wadsworth Park Museum, Luton.

Working conditions were brutal. Women and young children worked long hours for a pittance, in most unpleasant conditions, to satisfy the insatiable demand of the rich for this luxury. Demand fueled the industry, and industry fulfilled the demand.

Handed down from mother to daughter over the years, many bobbin-lace patterns have survived for more than three centuries. One, the Catherine of Aragon, was a design that in likelihood was flourishing as Shakespeare made his way to London. Lace historian Diana Smith of Northamptonshire, England, has an example of a pricking for the edging style and a sample of the filling that came with provenance, including the maker's name and location.

There are no proven likenesses of Shakespeare created during his lifetime. He was a commoner, and as sumptu-

ary laws restricted the wearing of lace to the nobility and the very rich, it is possible that he never wore lace himself. Nonetheless, Shakespeare certainly was familiar with lacemaking so let us let him have the last word: "The fashion wears out more apparel than the man." ♦

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## An Endowing Purse to Make

CHRISTOPHER JOHN BROOKE PHILLIPS

In England, from the Renaissance to the late seventeenth century, a rich bridegroom bestowed upon his bride on their wedding day a quantity of gold and silver coin con-

tained in an endowing purse. Not only did the cash give her an element of independent wealth, but it was seen as a symbol of undying love and a fruitful marriage. The shape of the well-filled purse left little to the imagination in respect to that symbolism.

The purse customarily was made (woven, knitted, or sewn) by a female member of the groom's family and embellished with a variety of needlework, including lace. Shaped like a tube or sleeve, it was worn folded in half and tied at the waist over a belt, cord, or chain. Often it would be concealed below the outer skirt and accessed by a slit in the skirt's side seam. The small opening in the purse itself prevented easy access and kept the contents secure.

### MATERIALS

Fabric, fine-wale corduroy, Tan, embroidered with Light Tan thread, or fabric of choice, ¼ yard (0.2 m) or ½ yard (0.5 m) if fabric has a nap (corduroy or velveteen) or directional design

Edging, Torchon lace with heart motif, or edging of choice, ¾ inch (1.9 cm) wide

Sewing thread to match fabric

Finished size: 13½ inches (34.3 cm) long and 3¼ (9.5 cm) wide, excluding ties



A traditional  
endowing purse  
embellished  
with torchon  
bobbin lace  
made by  
the author's  
wife, Patricia  
Ann Phillips.  
Photograph by  
Joe Coca.



## INSTRUCTIONS

**Note:** Use ¼-inch (6 mm) seam allowances, unless otherwise stated.

### Purse

Cut 2 purse pieces 14 × 4 inches (35.6 × 10.2 cm) each, a facing 4 × 4 inches (10.2 × 10.2 cm), and 2 pieces 14 × 1½ inches (35.6 × 3.8 cm) for the ties.

On the two large rectangles, turn and stitch a ¼-inch (6-mm) hem on the 4-inch (10.2-cm) sides. On the wrong side of one piece (the front), measure 2¼ inches (5.7 cm) from one turned hem and centered side to side; draw a straight line 2¼ (5.7 cm) inches long from this point toward the opposite hemmed side.

Place the facing fabric on the front piece, right sides together, and stitch around the marked line, ¼ inch (6.4 mm) from line. Cut along the marked line to create a slit opening; “nick” the corners at 45 degrees being careful not to cut the stitching threads. Turn the facing through the opening to the wrong side, essentially creating a large bound buttonhole; steam press.

Fold each remaining tie piece in half lengthwise with wrong sides out; stitch along long sides and one end to form a narrow tube. Turn each right side out; steam press.

Lay the front piece out right side down. Check the facing for fit to ensure that the facing edges do not extend beyond the long edges of the front. Trim if necessary, bearing in mind that short edges of the facing will be held in place by the stitching that closes the side seams. Place the front and back with right sides facing and stitch the long sides (securing the buttonhole facing); turn right sides out.

Place one tie, centered side to side, at each end; the open end of each tie will be enclosed inside the purse when the seams are sewn. Stitch short ends closed.

Pin the lace or edging of your choice so that its outer edge is even with the edges of the purse; gather or fold the lace at the corners; sew in place. Remove pins; steam press.

**ABOUT THE AUTHOR AND DESIGNER.** *Christopher John Brooke Phillips was born in England and now lives with his wife, Patricia Ann, near Valencia, Spain. A retired businessman, he researches and writes on matters of historical interest. A historical novel set in the nineteenth century is in the works.*



# Torchon Lace to Knit

Karen Brock used instructions from Addie W. Heron's *Fancy Work for Pleasure & Profit* (1894; reprint, Chicago: Thompson & Thomas, 1905) to knit this torchon-lace edging. Use it as an alternative to bobbin lace on your endowing purse.

Photograph by Joe Coca.



I had just read Christopher Phillips's instructions for making an endowing purse incorporating handmade torchon lace when I discovered a pattern for knitted torchon lace in Addie W. Heron's *Fancy Work for Pleasure & Profit* (1894; reprint, Chicago: Thompson & Thomas, 1905). Although the title page boasts that the text is "Elaborately Illustrated" and there are some charming color plates, there was no illustration for the knitted torchon lace. Curious, I cast on and was pleased with the pretty edging that appeared. As no gauge, thread, or needle size was given, I used Handy Hands Lizbeth 100% cotton thread, size 20, in #603 Ecru, and size 1 needles. Next time, I'll use size 0 or 00 needles for a finer lace. The instructions for Knitted Torchon Lace are below, reproduced exactly as they appeared in the original ("over" equals yarnover; "narrow" equals knit two together).

—Karen Brock

Cast on 18 stitches. Knit back plain.

1st row, sl. 1, k. 2, over twice, p. 2 together, k. 5, narrow, over, k. 3, over, k. 3.

The 2nd and alternate rows are alike: i.e. knit plain until there are only 5 stitches on the left needle; then over twice, p. 2 together, k. 3.

3d row, sl. 1 k. 2, over twice, p. 2 together, k. 4, narrow, over, k. 5, over, k. 3.

5th row, sl. 1, k. 2, over twice, p. 2 together, k. 3, narrow, over, k. 1, narrow, over, k. 1, over, narrow, k. 1, over, k. 3.

7th row, sl. 1, k. 2, over twice, p. 2 together, k. 2, narrow, over, k. 1, narrow, over, k. 3, over, narrow, k. 1, over, k. 3.

9th row, sl. 1, k. 2, over twice, p. 2 together, k. 1, narrow, over, narrow, k. 1, over, k. 5, over, narrow, k. 1, over, k. 3.

11th row, sl. 1, k. 2, over twice, p. 2 together, k. 2, over, narrow, k. 1, over, narrow twice, over, k. 1, narrow, over, k. 1, narrow, over, k. 3.

13th row, sl. 1, k. 2, over twice, p. 2 together, k. 3, over, narrow, k. 1, over, narrow, k. 1, narrow, over, k. 1, narrow, over, narrow, k. 2.

15th row, sl. 1, k. 2, over twice, p. 2 together, k. 4, over, narrow, k. 1, over, sl. 1, narrow, slip the slipped stitch over the one last knitted; then over, k. 1, narrow, over, narrow, k. 2.

17th row, sl. 1, k. 2, over twice, p. 2 together, k. 5, over, narrow, k. 3, narrow, over, narrow, k. 2.

19th row, sl. 1, k. 2, over twice, p. 2 together, k. 6, over, narrow, k. 1, narrow, over, narrow, k. 2.

21st row, sl. 1, k. 2, over twice, p. 2 together, k. 7, over, sl. 1, narrow, draw the slipped stitch over the one last knitted; then, over, narrow, k. 2.

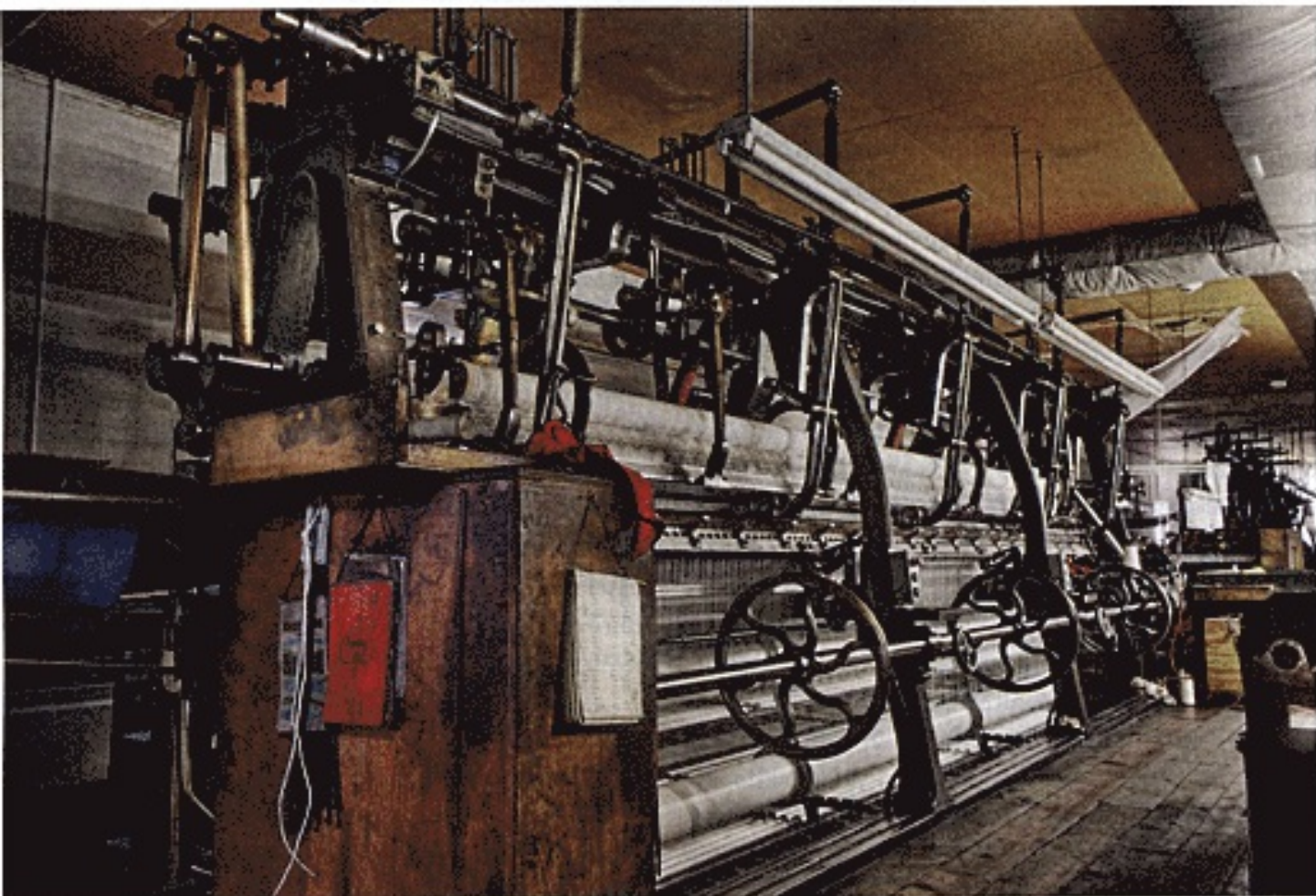
Repeat from first row.



# Leavers Lace

## The Aristocrat of Textile Fabrics

SUSAN J. JEROME



FOR CENTURIES, LACE HAS BEEN synonymous with elegance and expense, celebrated in poetry and art. Bobbin lace, formed over a pillow, and needle lace, painstakingly built thread upon thread, decorated the clothing of the wealthiest individuals and the ecclesiastical linens of the church. Sumptuary laws instituted in Europe in the fourteenth through seventeenth centuries emphasized the economic status of lace by limiting its ownership to those of higher social status and

That her life's art  
Might not be lost  
A lace-maker's heart  
Was turned to frost

And when it is cold  
She makes rare lace  
Which is never sold  
On the market-place

—From Wilson MacDonald's  
poem "The Lace Maker"

also by recognizing lace manufacturing's economic importance to a country.

The seventeenth and eighteenth centuries ushered in the Age of Enlightenment and the Industrial Revolution, catalysts for social upheaval in Europe and America. Differences in economic positions fell away with the violent revolutions in France and the United States, and shifting financial systems helped develop a thriving middle class with a strong consumer-oriented power. Lace became readily available to this

Front platform of a Wallis and Longdon Leavers lace machine capable of producing lace in bulk. Circa 1890. Collection of the Leavers Lace Corporation, West Greenwich, Rhode Island.

Photograph by Steve Mason and courtesy of the Leavers Lace Corporation.



new middle class with the advent of machine-made lace. It all began with a lacemaking machine invented in 1813 by John Leavers (1786–1848).

Leavers (whose name is sometimes spelled “Levers”) integrated ideas from a number of earlier inventions to overcome the most

challenging aspect of making lace by machine—changing the direction of a single or multiple threads while forming a stable base fabric. Leavers expanded on the bobbinet or netmaking machinery first patented by John Heathcoat (or Heathcote; 1783–1861) in England in 1808. Heathcoat’s device produced a net ground that was then darned or otherwise embroidered by hand to produce a lacelike fabric. Heathcoat’s patent on this earlier machine was so similar to Leavers’s device that Leavers never attempted to protect his own invention, fearing that Heathcoat would accuse him of industrial theft.

Leavers’s machine, used for making plain net, was further refined in 1823 by John Bertie (1796–unknown) of Basford, Nottinghamshire, and Richard Biddle (dates unknown) of Nottingham, who developed a method for producing fancy lace upon a net ground. This machine is essentially the same as the one used today to make Leavers lace.

Although the lace retains Leavers’s name, other inventors, most of them English, made numerous modifications to the bobbinet machine, reflecting its complexity. The years between 1780 and 1850 were rich in inventions relating to the textile industry. The English government routinely issued patents on these devices, to be respected or ignored, defended or not, by the patent holders. Volume XIII, May to August 1835, of *The Metropolitan Magazine* lists three different patents for “improvements in lace-machinery” during the month of March alone.

John Heathcoat established a factory in Paris in 1818 because of patent issues. John Bertie continued to re-



ceive patents “for certain improvements in machinery for making bobbin-net lace” with James Gibbons (dates unknown) in the 1830s. Richard Biddle owned a lacemaking factory with Richard Birkin (1805–1870) in Nottingham. In August 1842, according to *The*

*Date-Book of Remarkable and Memorable Events Connected with Nottingham and Its Neighborhood, 1750–1850* (Nottingham: John E. Sutton, 1852), workers protesting working conditions and wages attempted “to oust the workmen from Messrs. Biddle and Birkin’s factory, but Mr. Sherwin, one of the county magistrates, took steps to prevent it.”

Other names instrumental in the development of lacemaking machines are virtually unknown today except through patent records. Among them are John Leavers’s two brothers, Joseph and Thomas (dates unknown); Hooton Deverill (1785–1868); T. Alcock (1807?–1902); and William Henry Nunn (1794/95–1876).

The Leavers lace machine established machine-made lace as a fashionable and affordable textile for dresses and accessories. Leavers, Heathcoat, Bertie, and others created a manufacturing center in Nottingham that would eventually reach across the Atlantic to influence textile production in Rhode Island, Connecticut, and elsewhere in America.

Leavers lace most closely imitates handmade bobbin lace, which is made by manipulating pairs of thread over a pattern. By the middle of the nineteenth century, machines could produce a variety of lace patterns in imitation of popular bobbin laces such as Valenciennes, Cluny, and Honiton. These early machine-made laces closely resemble those made by hand, although some characteristics help to distinguish them. Leavers lace has a strong zigzag movement in the solid areas of the lace pattern where the threads pass between several warps. Fine-quality machine-made laces, those more commonly

Front platform of a Wallis and Longdon Leavers lace machine. Circa 1900. Collection of the Leavers Lace Corporation, West Greenwich, Rhode Island.

Photograph by Steve Mason and courtesy of the Leavers Lace Corporation.



made before World War II (1939–1945), have a narrow zig-zag or V-shaped pattern. A second feature of machine-made lace is the presence of parallel lines caused by the twisting action of the warps, a feature not seen in handmade lace, in which the maker can manipulate the threads in any direction. These parallel lines can be accentuated by the use of a weft yarn that is lighter in weight than the warp.

Some laces include an outline, or cordonnet, to emphasize elements of the lace design. As the manufacturing of lace became more and more mechanized, the process of running an outline thread could be done either by hand or by machine. In *The Identification of Lace*, Pat Earnshaw points out that each thread of a hand-run cordonnet has two cuts in it, at the beginning and the end of the outline, whereas a machine cordonnet has four cuts because two separate patterning threads are needed to go around either side of the design.

The British government closely guarded the secrets of English lace manufacturing, preventing the export of machinery throughout most of the nineteenth century. Those engaged in industrial espionage in the United States, however, managed to smuggle in equipment, workers, and patent information throughout the century. The first factories manufacturing handmade lace had been established in Massachusetts in the eighteenth century in Ipswich, but it wasn't until 1909 that the manufacturing of machine-made lace became established in America.

In June 1935, Hugo N. Schloss, president of the American Lace Manufacturers Association, appeared before a special federal tariff committee to assert that "... the machinery of the lace manufacturing industry is a potential arm of national defense." According to *Time* magazine (July 8, 1935), Schloss was hoping to forestall a reduction in importation fees as part of a trade agreement



with France. The lower cost of importing French lace could lead to unemployment of American lace workers, most of whom lived and worked in Rhode Island.

The Spanish-American War (1898) deployed American soldiers in both the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans. The victorious United States then

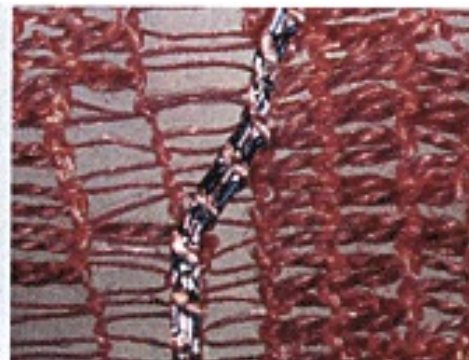
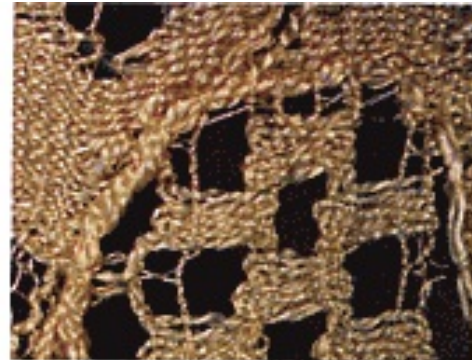
annexed the former Spanish colonies of Puerto Rico, the Philippines, and Guam, resulting in the permanent installation of troops on these islands, all infested with malaria-carrying mosquitoes. At this time, the United States had no means of producing protective mosquito nets. Machine-made lace manufacturing still was centered in England, with only 100 Leavers machines installed in factories in America. To allow for the production of mosquito netting to protect American troops stationed in the tropics, a tariff on the importation of lacemaking machines was lifted for seventeen months, from August 6, 1909, to December 31, 1910.

Rhode Island dominated the machine-made lace industry throughout the twentieth century. Thirty-four of the fifty-four mills in the United States in 1948 were located there, with the other twenty spread throughout six states as far away as Ohio and Pennsylvania. Rhode Island possessed 401 of the 730 Leavers lace machines in the country.

The July 8, 1935, *Time* magazine named the late Senator Nelson Wilmarth Aldrich (1841–1915) of Rhode Island "Godfather of the U.S. lace industry." Senator Aldrich had helped write the Tariff Act of 1909, which categorized lace as either expensive or inexpensive and which included a 70 percent import tax on "expensive laces ... made on Lever [sic] or Gothrough machines." The act also included a provision allowing Leavers lace machines from England to be imported duty-free, enabling Rhode Island's textile mills to purchase the complex, expensive machinery necessary for making lace.

Wallis and Longdon Leavers lace machine with lace. Circa 1900. Collection of the Leavers Lace Corporation, West Greenwich, Rhode Island. Photograph by Steve Mason and courtesy of the Leavers Lace Corporation.





LEFT: This sample of gold Leavers lace, made in the late nineteenth century, shows the high quality of the early machine-made laces. The warp yarns run from top to bottom. Note the difference in the weight of the warp and weft yarns, which contributes to the texture of the fabric. Collection of the University of Rhode Island Textile Conservation Laboratory, Kingston, Rhode Island. (URI 2003.11.74). Donor: Robert P. Bainbridge.

CENTER: Warp yarns run from top to bottom in this sample of burgundy Leavers lace. The zigzag motion of the weft yarns is clearly visible. This lace was made at the Leavers Lace Corporation in West Greenwich, Rhode Island, 2003. Collection of the University of Rhode Island Textile Conservation Laboratory, Kingston, Rhode Island. (URI 2003.23.02). Donor: York Roberts, Leavers Lace Corporation, West Greenwich, Rhode Island.

RIGHT: The outline, or cordonnet, a core yarn wrapped with metal, was originally sewn into machine-made lace by hand. The lace machines used at the Leavers Lace Corporation, West Greenwich, Rhode Island, which date to the 1890s and incorporate the highest in technological advances, are capable of weaving in the cordonnet. Collection of the University of Rhode Island Textile Conservation Laboratory, Kingston, Rhode Island. (URI 2003.23.03). Donor: York Roberts, Leavers Lace Corporation, West Greenwich, Rhode Island.

Photographs by Margaret T. Orlowicz and courtesy of the University of Rhode Island Textile Conservation Laboratory.

Nevertheless, importing the machinery was not enough: experienced, skilled workers had to be brought in to operate and maintain it. The Seekonk Lace Company in Pawtucket, Rhode Island, founded in 1909, is one example of a factory, and community, built on the knowledge of immigrants. In *Rhode Island: An Inventory of Historic Engineering and Industrial Sites*, authors Gary Kulik and Julia Bonham state, "[t]he Pawtucket mill operate[d] thirty-four lace machines imported from the works of John Jardine, of Nottingham, England. All but five of these machines were built between 1910 and 1914. In its early years, the industry depended upon skilled English weavers to operate the Leavers lace machines. . . ." (Liberty Fabrics purchased both Seekonk Lace and the Rhode Island Lace Works in Barrington in 1987, then closed both plants in 1991, citing as the reason the existence of Far Eastern manufacturers who operated on much lower pay scales.)

During the 1920s and 1930s, lace was a fashionable fabric for dresses and hats as well as decorations for intimate apparel. By the 1960s, however, changes in fashion together with competition from European manufacturers contributed to a steady decline in the number of lace mills in the United States. Today, the Leavers Lace Corporation in West Greenwich, Rhode Island, is the only Amer-

ican lace mill that is still operational. Owned by Klauber Brothers, Inc., and managed by York Roberts, a fourth-generation lacemaker, it still competes with overseas production and still creates Leavers lace on machines that are more than one hundred years old. ♦

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# Aemilia Ars and the Twelve PROMISES in LACE

JEANINE ROBERTSON



Overall view of the Aemilia Ars altar cloth on the main altar at Sacro Cuore, 2008. Collection of Sacro Cuore, Bologna, Italy. Photograph by Andrea Rimondi.

IN 1898, A GROUP IN BOLOGNA, ITALY, inspired by the English Arts and Crafts Movement, founded the Aemilia Ars Society to promote the production of flawlessly executed handcrafts in contrast to the ugly manufactured goods being mass-produced at the time. Its branch of embroidery and lace, started the following year, would not only outlive the parent company but would be acclaimed worldwide for its breathtaking needle laces. Known from 1903 as the Aemilia Ars Cooperative of Lace and Embroidery, the organization began to provide local women with a means of earning a modest income from handwork that could be done at home without interfering with regular household duties. The nobility and upper classes of Bologna not only purchased the finished textiles but assisted in their sale at Italian tourist destinations and abroad. Aemilia Ars laces and embroideries caused a sensation in the arts world and took numerous prizes and gold medallions at international exhibitions.

Becoming a part of the cooperative meant a great deal to women of all economic levels of Bologna's society; an outsider commented on its "familylike" atmosphere. Many workshops and schools were formed around the city; the one that made its home at the Santuario Sacro Cuore di Gesù (Sanctuary of the Sacred Heart of Jesus) was renowned for the excellence of its needlework and its large staff of talented needleworkers.

Don Riccardo Zucchi (1869–1929) became the first parish priest of Sacro Cuore when it was elevated from temple to parish in 1915. He had attended the Faculty of Mathematics, Physics and Natural Sciences of Bologna and had taught mathematics and physics to students of the seminary. Following his wishes, the Scuola Femminile di Lavoro del Sacro Cuore di Gesù (School of Feminine Works of the Sacred Heart of Jesus), situated at the



Detail of the Aemilia Ars altar cloth; needle-lace panels that connect the circular embroideries (*tondi*). The motif at top and bottom is the inspiration for the project that follows, 2008. Collection of Sacro Cuore, Bologna, Italy. Photograph by Andrea Rimondi.

side entrance to Sacro Cuore), had been established in 1912. Countess Lina Bianconcini Cavazza (1860–1942) also took an interest in the school and under the tutelage of the master teachers of the art of Aemilia Ars needle lace and embroidery, the students of the workshop of Sacro Cuore developed their talents with the needle. In 1927, on the tenth anniversary of the temple, the students and teachers, after working for more than two years on Sunday afternoons and their days off, presented the church with an elegant altar cloth for the main altar. Measuring 7.1 yards (6.5 m)



long and 15.7 inches (40.0 cm) high, it contains thirteen panels, twelve depicting the Promises of the Sacred Heart of Jesus and a central panel depicting the Sacred Heart itself. The altar cloth is still used at Easter and on other special occasions.

The embroidery was worked on the finest linen in silk thread; the thread is so fine that it is sometimes said that it is made from the embroiderers' hair. The iconography is so significant that it was used again in stained glass windows made in 1934 for the apse of Sacro Cuore.

Magnificent Aemilia Ars needle lace frames the circular embroideries (*tondi*). Flowers, vines, grapes, and wheat, all richly symbolic, are executed masterfully in needle lace throughout the framework.

It is likely that Antonilla Cantelli (1914–2008), despite having been a pupil at Sacro Cuore for only a short time, participated in the making of the altar cloth by executing small details. One of the first motifs that she executed was the

rose. It appears in many Aemilia Ars pieces (and in the companion project that follows). Antonilla started learning Aemilia Ars needle lace at the age of thirteen years under master lacemaker Olga Grassi (1886–1943), and she was working on a very complex piece of her own design when she died at the age of ninety-three. She attended the school for eight hours a day; in the evenings, she made small pieces of Aemilia Ars needle lace to sell. Antonilla would go on to become one of the most talented Aemilia Ars lacemakers.

Between 1948 and 1955, the embroiderers made a smaller version of the grand altar cloth

for a smaller chapel that they themselves used. It is much simpler and substitutes roses for the sheaves of wheat of the larger cloth.

Vilma Bergami (1937– ), a talented embroiderer who was a student until 1954, returned sometime after 1955 to visit her former teachers. As she admired the smaller altar cloth, a teacher, Francesca Ortolani (1916–1997), revealed that all of the students had participated in some small way in its creation without knowing that the pieces of lace they were making would become part of it. Vilma keeps a small picture of her patron saint in her wallet that she was given on her last day at Sacro Cuore in 1954; on the back of the picture are written the names of her teachers: Francesca Ortolani, Adele Zaccarelli (1895–1970), Ines Tampieri (1894–1985), Novella Albertazzi (1899–1986), and Nella Zanardi (1913–1970). Each teacher had her own specialty—Francesca's was colored embroidery, Adele's was designing, Ines was an expert in Aemilia Ars

## Associazione Culturale "I merletti di Antonilla Cantelli"

The Cultural Association "Antonilla Cantelli's Laces" was founded in Bologna in 2004 in homage to a great master of Aemilia Ars. Antonilla Cantelli (1914–2008) was in full artistic activity until the last day of her long and hard-working life. The mission of the association is to execute the laces according to the methods and criteria that she taught. Because they come from someone who herself participated in the Aemilia Ars Cooperative's production, they constitute a point of reference for continuing a tradition that must not be forgotten. The association's works have been displayed in Bologna and elsewhere.

—J. R.





needle lace, Novella looked after the children, and Nella made the personal linens—but each one knew how to do everything. ♦

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[www.sacrocuore-bologna.it/it/guida.php?ID=192](http://www.sacrocuore-bologna.it/it/guida.php?ID=192) (photographs of the altar cloth).

**ABOUT THE AUTHOR.** Jeanine Robertson lives with her mother and daughter near Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada. She has been researching Italian needlework for more than ten years and belongs to several needlework guilds. Visit her blog at <http://italian-needlework.blogspot.com>. She thanks the Archiginnasio Library in Bologna, Italy; Don Antonio Rota, parish priest of Sacro Cuore; Fedora Vigna; Bianca Rosa Bellomo; Dr. Gabriella Pizzi Vincenti; and Dr. Francesco Vincenti for their invaluable assistance in the preparation of this article.

LEFT: Detail of one of the circular embroideries (tondi) of the altar cloth. The text around the embroidery translates "I will give them all the grace necessary for their state of life." 2008.

Collection of Sacro Cuore, Bologna, Italy. Photograph by Andrea Rimondi.

RIGHT: Students of the "Work School" at Sacro Cuore, Bologna, Italy, with teachers Olga Grassi (1886–1943) at left and Adalgisa Armaroli (1884–1955) at right. Circa 1916.

Photographer unknown. Collection of the Associazione Culturale "I merletti di Antonilla Cantelli," Bologna, Italy. Photograph courtesy of the Associazione Culturale "I merletti di Antonilla Cantelli."

## Aemilia Ars Needle-Lace Insert to Stitch

ASSOCIAZIONE CULTURALE "I MERLETTI DI ANTONILLA CANTELLI"  
AND JEANINE ROBERTSON

This insert is taken from the original Aemilia Ars altar cloth made by the students and teachers of the workshop/school located at the Sacred Heart Sanctuary in Bologna, Italy, and completed in 1927 (see the preceding article). It is worked in the tradition of Aemilia Ars and uses the following traditional stitches: buttonhole stitch (*punto smerlo*), overcast or cording stitch (*punto cordoncino*), picots (*gruppetti*), spider webs with picots (*ragnetti*), and Venetian knotted or Antwerp stitch (*punto chiaro*).

#### INSTRUCTIONS

##### Insert

Center and trace the design (Figure 1) on the white paper. Layer the vellum, the traced design, and all cardstock pieces in this order; round off all corners. Using the size

9 needle and the Glace thread, overcast all pieces together around the edges. With the size 9 needle, punch holes and work support stitches with the size 10 needle and the Glace thread (Figure 2).

#### MATERIALS

- DMC Cordonnet Thread, 100% cotton thread, size 50, 286 yards (261.5 m)/ball, 1 ball of Blanc; [www.dmc-usa.com](http://www.dmc-usa.com)
- Coats Glace Thread, 100% cotton thread, size 40, 300 yds (274.3 m)/spool, 1 spool of White; [www.coatscrafts.co.uk](http://www.coatscrafts.co.uk)
- John James Needles, embroidery, sizes 9 and 10; [www.colonialneedle.com](http://www.colonialneedle.com)
- Vellum or tracing paper, 2½ × 4½ inches (6.3 × 11.4 cm)
- White paper, 2½ × 4½ inches (6.3 × 11.4 cm)
- Bristol cardstock, 2½ × 4½ inches (6.3 × 11.4 cm), 3 pieces
- Finished size: 1½ × 3¼ (3.8 × 8.3 cm)





The needle-lace insert stitched by members of the Associazione Culturale "I merletti di Antonilla Cantelli" in Bologna, Italy. The insert's rose motif is based on an insert from the Aemilia Ars altar cloth. Photograph by Joe Giza.

**Notes:** To create the motif outlines of laid threads, run the working thread under the support stitches. Do not pull so tightly as to distort the design shape, but these threads should follow the design lines without any slack. Buttonhole stitches are always worked from left to right and usually over two padding threads, unless stated otherwise. Turn the work accordingly to execute the stitches properly. Abandoned threads are left on top of the lace to be buried and cut when the work for the area is finished. Often these threads may be utilized as padding threads for buttonhole stitches executed at a later stage. Try to keep the working surface as neat as possible by ending threads that are no longer needed right away. Bend the cardstock over your finger to better execute the stitches. The three layers of cardstock make for a strong but flexible support that can withstand movement during the stitching of the lace.

Using the Cordonnet thread, start stitching the design with the central rose motif by passing 3 times under the support stitches around the circumference of the circle at the flower's center. Work a row of buttonhole stitches with 2 padding threads around the circumference over the laid threads. To close the circle, stitch into the 1st buttonhole stitch.

Pass once around the outlines of all petals under the support stitches. Work rows forward (left to right) and then return (right to left) of Venetian knotted stitches inside each petal (Figure 3). For the main design line, run a line of Cordonnet thread under the support stitches 3 times between Points 1 and 2 (starting at 1 to 2, 2 to 1, and again 1 to 2) and abandon the thread (Figure 4).

Turn work; start at Point 2 (Figure 5) and work the end of the curl with 5 buttonhole stitches for the 1st row, enclosing the laid threads. Carry the thread back to the left and skip the 1st buttonhole stitch of the 1st row, stitching into the festoons (base loops) of the previous buttonhole stitches. Work 3 stitches for the 2nd row, enclosing the carried over thread. Whipstitch the festoon of the next buttonhole stitch to travel, coming out inside the festoon of the last stitch of the previous row. Continue to work more buttonhole stitches over the laid threads along the main design line until arriving at the picot. Work a picot and continue with the buttonhole stitches until arriving at the base of the 1st leaf stem. Abandon the padding threads; they will be picked up later when continuing with the main design line.

Run the thread under the support stitches of the leaf's interior outline to Point 3 (Figure 5). Run a thread counterclockwise around the outer rectangular perimeter of the entire design, returning to Point 3 (Figure 5). From Point 3 pass under the support stitches along the other side of the leaf's interior outline, returning to the base of the stem. Pass twice more under the support stitches around the interior lines of the leaf, stopping to execute the overcast bar in the center on the last pass by carrying the thread across the center of the leaf under the support stitch on the other side and over the laid threads and then back to the starting point, going over and under the laid threads. Overcast the threads just laid and pass under the overcast stitches to return to the starting point. Continue returning to the base of the stem (Figure 6). Starting from the base of the leaf stem, work a row of buttonhole stitches over the laid threads with 2 padding threads to the central tip of the leaf (Figure 7).

Work an overcast bar attached to the outer rectangular perimeter of the design; and return under the overcast bar to carry the thread back to the point where the leaf starts to begin a 2nd row of buttonhole stitches. Stitch through the festoons of the buttonhole stitches in the previous row. Cover the carried-over thread when completing the 2nd row, stopping a few stitches less than

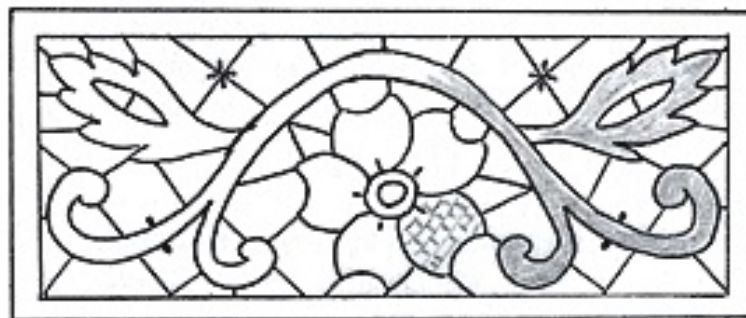


Figure 1  
Figures 1–24  
courtesy of  
the Associazione  
Culturale "I  
merletti di  
Antonilla Cantelli."  
All figures may be  
photocopied for  
personal use.





Figure 2



Figure 3



Figure 4



Figure 5

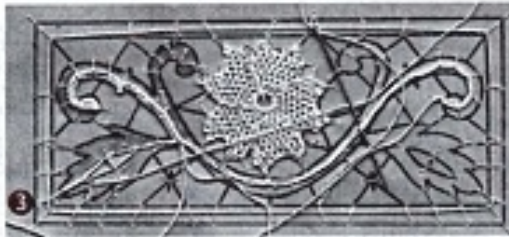


Figure 6



Figure 7



Figure 8



Figure 9



Figure 10



Figure 11



Figure 12



Figure 13



Figure 14



Figure 15



Figure 16



Figure 17



Figure 18



Figure 19



Figure 20



Figure 21



Figure 22





Figure 23



Figure 24

the 1st row. Carry the thread back to begin the 3rd row. Before beginning 3rd row, run the thread under the support stitch at the tip of the 1st lobe and return to the beginning of the row, then work an overcast bar, hooking into the row of previously completed buttonhole stitches along the main design line, returning under the overcast stitches. Work a short row of buttonhole stitches over the laid threads to form the first lobe of the leaf (Figure 8).

Return to the beginning of the 3rd row underneath the stitches of the leaf lobe and work the 3rd row of buttonhole stitches. At the tip of the 2nd lobe, pass a thread under the support stitch of the outer rectangular perimeter of the design as stitched for the tip of the leaf, work an overcast bar and return to make a small row of buttonhole stitches for the 2nd lobe. Work the 3rd lobe with a small overcast bar at the tip in the same manner. Pass back under the stitches of the overcast bar to begin a new row of buttonhole stitches on the other side of the leaf (Figure 9).

Work the other half of the leaf. Note that the initial and ending buttonhole stitches of this row will share the same "vein" as the stitches on the other side of the leaf. When arriving at the leaf stem, proceed in the same manner as for the initial part of this row, sharing the central "vein" and creating buttonhole-stitch festoons on either side (Figures 8 and 9).

Using the previously abandoned thread, continue the row of buttonhole stitches along the main design line by stitching into the festoon of the last executed stitch and with 2 padding threads until arriving at Point 4 (Figure 10). Carry the thread over to Point 5 and work a row of buttonhole stitches with 2 padding threads stitching into the festoons of the previous row and covering the carried-over thread.

Continue the buttonhole stitches along the main design line until arriving at the base of the next leaf. Work the next leaf as before but do not stitch the overcast bar that connects the lobe to the buttonhole stitches of the main design line. This bar will be stitched when working the buttonhole stitches of the main design line after the leaf is completed (Figures 11 and 12).

After completing the leaf, continue the row of buttonhole stitches along the main design line, stopping to work the overcast bar that connects to the lobe of the leaf below. Continue to the picot, work the picot, and continue to the end at Point 6 (Figure 13). Work the end of the curl as before: a row of 5 buttonhole stitches and then a row of 3. Turn the work and work a row of buttonhole stitches with 2 padding threads until arriving at Point 7 (Figure 14). Abandon the thread.

With a new thread and 1 padding thread, start at Point 8 (Figure 15) and work a row of buttonhole stitches until arriving at the overcast bar that connects the curl to itself; work this bar. Proceed to the next overcast bar that connects the tip of the leaf lobe to the main buttonhole stitch row; work this bar. Proceed to the picot, work the picot and continue to the base of the smaller curl. Almost immediately after the picot where the thread was abandoned at Point 7, work buttonhole stitches over the central "vein" as for the leaf stem (Figure 16).

Run the thread under the support stitches and back and then up again to create a 3 laid-thread base for the smaller curl and work the end part as before for the larger curl; abandon the thread (Figure 16).

At the base of the smaller curl (Figure 17), begin a row of buttonhole stitches with 2 padding stitches that will follow around to the end, sharing the "vein" of the 5 previously worked buttonhole stitches at the end (Figure 18) abandon the thread. Work a 2nd row of buttonhole stitches from the base of the small curl (Figure 18), starting a couple of stitches in to form a tapered edge. Stitch around the end part, remembering to stitch the overcast bar that connects the smaller curl to itself. Immediately after the end part, this row of stitches will share the central "vein" on the return trip down the other side (Figure 19).

Continue with the main design line of buttonhole stitches, sharing the central "vein" as the previous stitches, until arriving at the base of the smaller curl on the other side of the design; abandon the thread (Figure 20). Work and finish the curls on the other side, starting with the 3 laid-thread base for the smaller curl. If coming to



point where the buttonhole stitches cannot be worked from left to right, abandon the thread and start again elsewhere. Remember to use the abandoned threads as padding threads when opportune. For the last row of buttonhole stitches to complete the larger curl, use 1 padding thread.

Whipstitch all the petal outlines of the rose with long stitches and at the same time remember to work all overcast bars connected to them (Figure 21). Work buttonhole stitches with 2 padding threads around the petal outlines (Figure 22). When the last petal is completed, whipstitch the outline of the central circle and work a row of buttonhole stitches with 2 padding threads around the circle, working picots where shown (Figure 23). Close the circle by entering into the festoon of the 1st buttonhole stitch and bury the working thread end under the button-

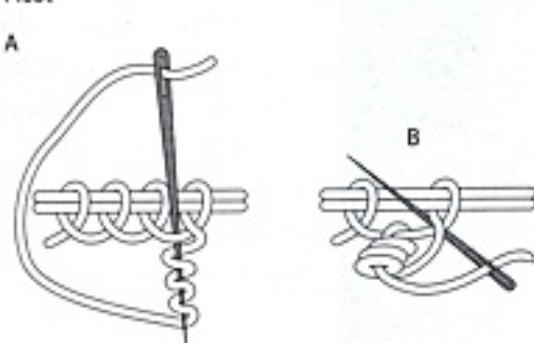
hole stitches before cutting. Pass twice more under the support stitches of the design's outer rectangle perimeter in a counterclockwise direction and work the overcast bars that connect the inner motifs when arriving at each (Figures 23 and 24). For the picots at the intersection of overcast bars, see the Spider Webs with Picots diagram. Work buttonhole stitches with 2 padding threads over the laid threads of the outer rectangle perimeter of the design (Figure 24).

Make sure all working thread ends are buried under the buttonhole stitches and trimmed close to the finished lace. Cut and remove the support stitches on the back of the cardstock; remove the lace.

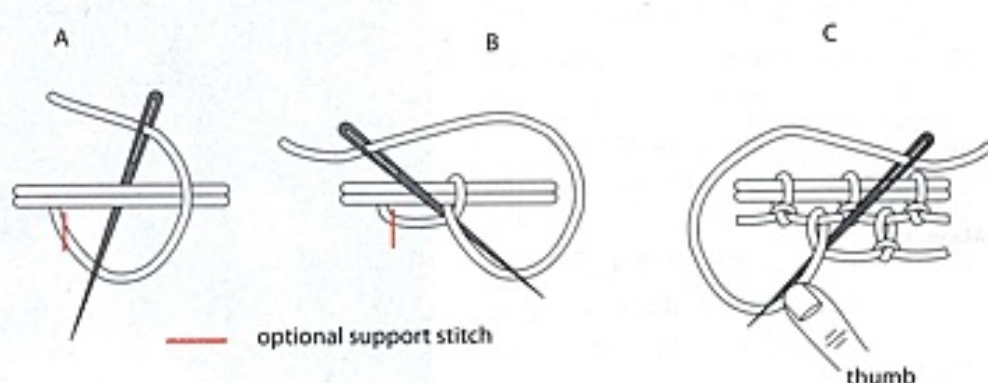
#### Finishing

Wash lace; iron with a pressing cloth face down on a thick towel.

Picot



Venetian Knotted Stitch



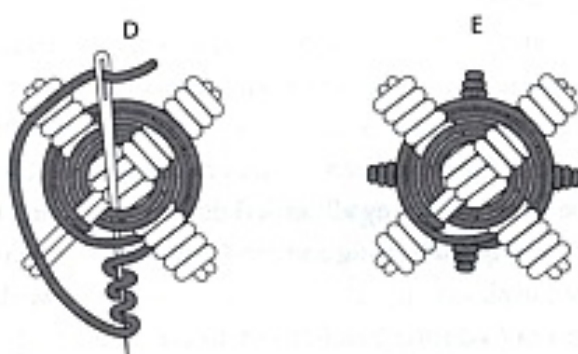
Overcast Stitch



Spider Web Picots



Buttonhole Stitch



All stitch diagrams by Jeanine Robertson.



# Laura Ingalls's Knitted Petticoat Lace

MARY LYCAN

**O**F ALL THE NEEDLEWORK described in Laura Ingalls Wilder's Little House books, the petticoat lace that Laura (1867–1957) knitted during the Hard Winter of 1880–1881 speaks to me the most. As supply trains coming west from Minnesota were blocked by ice and snow, as food and fuel stocks dwindled to nothing, as shrieking blizzard winds blew snow into house-high drifts or scoured the street bare, thirteen-year-old Laura sat in her Pa's store building in De Smet, Dakota Territory, and knitted lace edging on fine needles with a spool of cotton thread.

The Ingalls girls:  
(left to right)  
Carrie, Mary,  
and Laura.  
Photographer  
and date  
unknown.  
Photograph © the  
Laura Ingalls  
Wilder Museum,  
Marionville, Missouri.

Winters were usually a season of relative leisure for farmwomen. After the hard work of harvest and preserving, drying, smoking, or freezing food for the coming winter, they could rest a little. Typically, they did their housework in the morning and served the main meal at noon. After the dishes were done and the baby put down for a nap, they could sit down with their needlework.

Even without a farm, the Ingalls family had kept to that pattern during the previous year when they wintered over in the surveyor's house at Silver Lake. "In the snug house Laura and Carrie helped Ma with the housework, and Grace played, running about the big room with toddler short steps. . . . Listening to stories, Grace would fall asleep. Then Ma laid her in her trundle bed by the stove, and they all settled down for a cozy afternoon of knitting and sewing and crocheting" [*By the Shores of Silver Lake*].

There was plenty of routine needlework to do. The four Ingalls girls wore wool dresses and petticoats over



long flannel underwear, all handsewn from store-bought yard goods. Ma and Mary knitted socks for Pa and stockings for all the girls. Everyone had to be cocooned in wool coats, shawls, hoods, mufflers, and mittens before they could step outside.

Ma could knit socks by firelight or lamplight, and blind Mary could knit at any time. Early afternoons, with their strong sunlight, were the best time for the fiddly patterns and tiny stitches of Laura's fancywork. Midday winter sunlight reflected from ice or

snow was the strongest and clearest light of all.

Pa's store building in De Smet, on the east side of north-and-south running Main Street (now Calumet), had windows on each side of the front door. That was just the place to put Ma's and Mary's rocking chairs for the most warmth and light, and that is where Laura sat to work on her lace on a Saturday in October of 1880:

In the sunshine from the western windows Mary



rocked gently, and Laura's steel knitting needles flashed. Laura was knitting lace, of fine white thread, to trim a petticoat. She sat close to the window and watched the street, for she was expecting Mary Power and Minnie Johnson.

They were coming to spend the afternoon, bringing their crocheting. . . . "Oh, bother! I've miscounted the stitches!" she exclaimed. She unraveled the row and began to pick the tiny stitches up again on the fine needle. . . . The little loops of thread were dimming before her eyes as if she were going blind. She could not see them. The spool of thread dropped from her lap and rolled away on the floor as she jumped up [*The Long Winter*].

Then another blizzard struck.

When coal supplies began to run low in De Smet and trains were blocked again, the Ingalls family stopped using the coal heater in the front room and huddled around the cook stove in the kitchen in the back. The cramped, darker kitchen had a single side window. Laura kept knitting her lace. When sunshine melted the frost on the window and it refroze into sheets of ice over the cold glass, she pried the ice off the panes, wiped them dry, and kept on knitting. She finished the lace before Christmas. The trains were still blocked, and so buying Christmas presents for anyone but Grace and Pa was out of the question. Laura wound her lace into a roll, wrapped it carefully in tissue paper, and gave it to Mary: "She fingered it lovingly and her face was shining with delight. 'I'll save it to wear when I go to college,' she said. 'It's another thing to help me to go. It will be so pretty on a white petticoat'" [*The Long Winter*].

After Christmas, Laura worked for the next four months twisting hay for fuel and grinding seed wheat in the coffee mill to make coarse flour to help her family survive. Her hands became rough and swollen and covered with cuts from the sharp slough hay. There would be no more fancywork until May.

The Ingallses were strapped for cash. While Pa had earned \$300 as a railroad camp storekeeper at Silver Lake



in 1879 and the family had lived free of charge in the surveyor's house the previous winter, the spring and summer of 1880 had proved very expensive. Pa had had to buy lumber and hire a man to help build the tiny shanty on the claim. He'd also bought a mow-

ing machine to cut hay for the coming winter. The first small garden crop would not be harvested until the fall of 1880, and so they'd had to buy food. By the time Laura helped Pa with stacking hay in the summer of 1880, her dress of "faded, thin calico" [*The Long Winter*] showed how pinched the family finances had become.

Laura likely couldn't afford yarn-eating fancywork projects such as shawls or fascinators (lightweight crocheted or knitted headscarves), and there's no telling whether the stores in the new-built town were carrying yarn for such things at all. Nevertheless, for the price of a spool of common thread, a clever girl could knit yards of the loveliest trimming imaginable. Beauty and luxury might be in short supply in De Smet in 1880, but by knitting lace, Laura could create both.

Petticoat edging—Laura's eventually measured 6 yards (5.5 m)—was the kind of major project that she could settle down to in the autumn. She knew that its pattern would keep her entertained, and its progress would be something that she could mark with pleasure over a period of many weeks or months. It was a fine antidote to cabin fever. Moreover, knitted-lace edgings seemed to be coming back into fashion. *Harper's Bazaar* had published no patterns at all for them from 1872 through 1875, but then it published two in 1876, seven in 1877, five in 1878, and three more in 1879.

At least one big city newspaper published them as well. The weekly edition of the *New-York Tribune* distributed many knitting and crochet patterns coast to coast by way of the ever-expanding rail network. A digest of the local daily edition, its only new material was the knitting and crochet column that it had begun publishing in 1879. On December 7, 1879, by popular demand from local subscribers, the *Tribune* began reprinting its weekly edition patterns in Sunday issues of the daily edition. The first Sunday column contained illustrated patterns for a Ladies' Knitted Vest and a

South Dakota claim shanty, similar in construction to Pa's, with tarpaper and lath. Photograph © South Dakota Historical Society



Map of De Smet, showing Chicago & North Western Railway trains coming to town from east and west. De Smet was the setting for *The Long Winter*. Photograph © South Dakota Historical Society.

Child's Knitted Gaiter, as well as knitting instructions for a Girl's Ribbed Hood, a Cloud, a Rose-Leaf Border, and a Useful Edging. A correspondence column, "The Scrap-Bag," replied to readers' requests—in this case for a narrow knitted insertion.

The lace-edging patterns went over particularly well. The next daily edition column on December 14, 1879, began by introducing three illustrated patterns for knitted lace edgings: Tunisian Lace, Rice Stitch Lace, and Knitted Point:

The great interest which many lady readers have shown in the directions for making knitted lace, given lately by THE TRIBUNE, suggests that other patterns, even prettier than the first and as easily made, shall be presented. Cuts [engravings] and explanations of three charming styles will accordingly be found below. When knit in fine Saxony yarn these edgings are the best possible trimming for flannel underclothing; they wear well, and washing only improves them. When moderately fine cotton is used this lace makes a beautiful trimming for tidies, handsome towels, and other articles of household napery which it is now the fashion to trim heavily, while knit in very fine cotton it serves many purposes which may be left to the ingenuity of the ladies to discover themselves.

Some of the patterns were reprinted from earlier printed sources, often without attribution; readers contributed others. When knitters wrote in to complain of mistakes in these patterns, the editor responded in the February 1, 1880, issue in an affronted tone: "The TRIBUNE naturally



gives contributed patterns exactly as they are sent, and assumes no responsibility in regard to them."

In early 1880, a flurry of correspondence broke out over corrections to a flawed Normandy Lace pattern with several knitters offering varying solutions. This and other matters made "The Scrap-Bag" a hodge-

podge of queries, answers, corrections, and complaints written by knitters who sometimes identified their location. Many were in the eastern seaboard states, but E. F. M. of Annapolis, Missouri, Mrs. F. D. of Bratton, Kansas, Mrs. W. P. Miller of Stockton, California, and Mrs. J. R. Riddle of Oregon were all reading the newspaper's knitting patterns, working them up, and writing about knitting through the pages of the *Weekly Tribune*. "The Scrap-Bag" was Little Ravelry on the Prairie.

The Knitted Shell Lace I have chosen for Laura (see the project below) likely was not new when it was published in the weekly *Tribune* on November 12, 1879. A rudimentary version of it had appeared in Jane Gauguin's *The Lady's Assistant*, Volume 3 (Edinburgh, 1857). Entitled "Edging (More Curious Than Beautiful)," it laid out the technique of yarnover increases in garter stitch offset by a multistitch decrease gathered over a single stitch. This was apparently a novelty compared to the more common practice of binding off a number of stitches in one row to form a point. The combination of Vandyke triangles interspersed with garter squares eventually emerged. Both bound-off-point and gathered-scallop versions were included in *How to Use Florence Knitting Silk* (Boston, 1880).

In 1880, the *Tribune* published a *Knitting Extra* (No.

## What the Ingalls Family Read

In December 1880, with trains blocked by blizzards, Mr. Gilbert brought the westbound mail on from Preston (now Preston Lake, 10 miles [16.1 km] east of De Smet) by sled and team. The Ingallses' bundle contained copies of the *Advance*, a Congregational church newspaper from Chicago for Ma; the *Inter-Ocean* weekly newspaper from Chicago and the *Pioneer Press* from Minneapolis for Pa; a bundle of copies of *The Youth's Companion*, published in Boston and forwarded by a Sunday school class in Minnesota, for Laura and Carrie; and from the Reverend Alden, a letter for Mary describing the Christmas barrel, now frozen on a snowbound train, which they would receive the following May [*The Long Winter*]. They saved the stories in *The Youth's Companion* for a Christmas treat.

—M. L.



59) and also *Knitting and Crochet: A Manual of Household Industry* (Extra No. 62), a forty-page booklet of knitting and crochet patterns, both reprints from its daily and weekly columns. The latter included thirty-three patterns for knitted-lace edging, several of them extensions and elaborations of the Knitted Shell Lace. Later publications pirated some of the patterns and elaborated the *Tribune* shells even further.

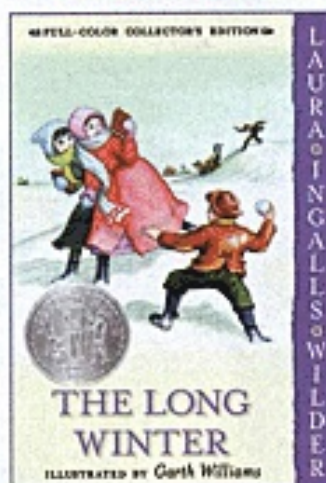
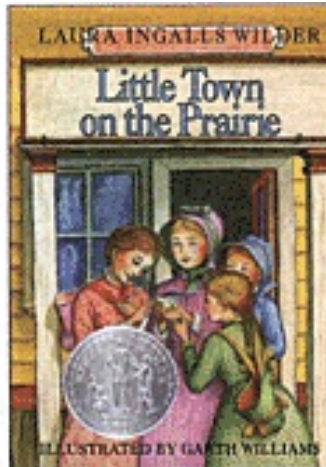
Frontier women prized—and shared—newspapers and magazines from back east. On Christmas Eve of 1879, when the newly married Boasts arrived from Iowa at the Silver Lake surveyor's house, Mrs. Boast had packed their slough-bound bobsled with a bride's pioneer essentials: popcorn, canned oysters, and a tall stack of story-papers, copies of the *New York Ledger*, that she soon lent to Laura:

Laura ran all the way home with an armful of papers. She burst into the house and dropped them in Mary's lap. "See, Mary! See what I've brought!" she cried. "Stories! They're all stories!" "Oh, hurry up and get the supper work done so we can read," Mary said eagerly. But Ma said, "Never mind the work, Laura! Read us a story!" [*By the Shores of Silver Lake*].

Laura always enjoyed knitting much more than sewing, and she was good at it. In her later teens, she knitted white lace stockings for herself and knitted and crocheted "dozens of yards" of white thread lace edgings for "the open ends of the pillowcases, the throats and wrists of the high-necked, long-sleeved nightgowns, the necks and armholes of the chemises, and the leg-bands of the drawers" of her trousseau [*These Happy Golden Years*].

Ma had taught Laura to knit in the Big Woods by age four, but Sunday was always a day of rest: "Mary [age six] could not sew on her nine-patch quilt, and Laura could not knit on the tiny mittens she was making for Baby Carrie." Likely, these mittens were little unshaped garter-stitch squares, which would be folded and sewn into bags: knitting and providing for others in one beginner project [*Little House in the Big Woods*].

Ma also taught Laura's daughter, Rose Wilder Lane



(1886–1968), "to knit when she was five years old," Rose notes in her *Woman's Day Book of American Needlework* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1963). From August 1892 to September 1894, when Rose was ages five to seven, Ma and Pa provided day-care at their house in De Smet while Laura worked as a seamstress, saving up to make a fresh start in Missouri:

Those afternoons I sat on a stool by Grandma's chair, and she taught me to knit and crochet and to piece my first patchwork quilt. When I finished a day's stint, I could help her sew carpet rags. . . . [When Laura came to take Rose home] she never failed to ask Grandma a little anxiously, "Has she been a good girl, Ma?"

I tried all day to be good, but I dreaded that question. . . . Grandma was kind, but she must be truthful. Sometimes she had to answer, "I don't want to tell you, Laura, but I've got to. She has not been very dil-

igent." And there would be my nine-patch block, not finished.

There it was, and nothing could change it now [Rose Wilder Lane's "Grandpa's Fiddle"].

Ma's fearsome Scottish rectitude was passed down to Laura in the form of a strong sense of responsibility for her family. Her passage to adulthood, hastened by Mary's blindness, was largely complete by the time she wrapped her lace in tissue paper and gave it to her sister.

I used to think that the lace was a metaphor for the blizzards of that Hard Winter—it was white, and it was endless. Now I see its gift as a symbol of hope for Mary's education and of Laura's commitment, at age thirteen, to help provide it for her. ♦

**ABOUT THE AUTHOR.** Mary Lycan is a Connecticut native who, at age seven, pestered her aunts until they taught her to knit. A retired choral conductor and the "inventor" of the Sherman Sock, she sings and knits in Niantic, Connecticut.

#### FURTHER READING

McClure, Wendy. *The Wilder Life: My Adventures in the Lost World of Little House on the Prairie*. New York: Riverhead, 2011.

TOP: Cover of *Little Town on the Prairie* by Laura Ingalls Wilder. Courtesy of Harper Collins.

BOTTOM: Cover of *The Long Winter* by Laura Ingalls Wilder, in which she describes the blizzards of 1880–1881 and knitting the lace for Mary's petticoat. Courtesy of Harper Collins.



Wilder, Laura Ingalls. *By the Shores of Silver Lake*. 1939. Reprint, illustrated by Garth Williams, New York: HarperCollins, 2004.  
———. *Little House in the Big Woods*. 1932. Reprint, illustrated by Garth Williams, New York: HarperCollins, 2004.  
———. *Little Town on the Prairie*. 1941. Reprint, illustrated by Garth Williams, New York: HarperCollins, 2008.  
———. *The Long Winter*. 1940. Reprint, illustrated by Garth Williams, New York: HarperCollins, 2004.

———. *These Happy Golden Years*. 1943. Reprint, illustrated by Garth Williams, New York: HarperCollins, 2004.  
Wilder, Laura Ingalls, and Rose Wilder Lane. "Grandpa's Fiddle." In *A Little House Sampler: A Collection of Early Stories and Reminiscences*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1988. Out of print.  
Zochert, Donald. *Laura: The Life of Laura Ingalls Wilder*. 1976. Reprint, New York, Avon Books, 1977.

## Shell Lace to Knit

Delicate shell-motif lace from the New York Tribune weekly edition, November 11, 1879, chosen by Mary Lycan for the lace that Laura knitted for Mary's petticoat in *The Long Winter*.  
Photograph by Joe Coca.





Mary Lycan charted this garter-lace edging from the pattern that appeared in the November 12, 1879, weekly edition of the *New-York Tribune*. The edging combines a ten-hole Vandyke pattern with a garter-stitch square gathered over one stitch to make a shell motif. A crisp beaded edge outlines the scallops. This pattern uses a small vocabulary—knit, purl, purl two together, slip one, and yarnover, plus the gathering—for a sophisticated effect. The curved shells soften the pointy Vandyke shape, and the Vandyke holes make an airy contrast to the solid texture of the shells.

## INSTRUCTIONS

**Notes:** Do use a lifeline. I found that a double sewing thread, inserted on Row 16 from the wrong side, with the sewing needle left hanging and ready for its next use, was very helpful when working at this small a gauge. When working yarnovers after a knit stitch and before a purl stitch, remember to bring the yarn forward one extra time to get the right number of increases. This occurs with the first double yarnovers on Rows 1, 5, 9, and 13. The yarnover at the beginning of each even-numbered row should be pulled tight to make a neat beaded edge. On Row 13, after working the fourth purl two together, count to make sure there are twelve stitches remaining on the left-hand needle. As you pass stitches 2 through 11 over the first stitch, insert your right needle into the first

**MATERIALS**  
DMC Cordonnet Special, size 40, 100% cotton thread, 249 yards (227.7 m)/20 gram (0.7 oz) ball, 1 ball of White (the sample requires 1 ball; additional thread required for yardage); [www.dmc-usa.com](http://www.dmc-usa.com)  
HiyaHiya Needles, double pointed, size 00000 (1 mm); [www.hiyahiyathnorthamerica.com](http://www.hiyahiyathnorthamerica.com)  
Sewing needle  
Sewing thread, all-purpose in contrasting color (for lifeline)  
Tapestry needle

Finished size: 1 rep measures about ¾ inch (2 cm) long and ¾ inch (2 cm) wide  
Gauge: 85 sts and 85 rows = 4 inches (10.2 cm), blocked; gauge is not critical for this project

See page 62 for Abbreviations and Techniques

The chart for this project is available in PDF format at [pieceworkmagazine.com/Charts-Illustrations](http://pieceworkmagazine.com/Charts-Illustrations)

stitch several times to tamp down the passed stitches, so you have room to work that stitch afterwards. With two stitches remaining on the left needle, work the yarnover, and purl two together.

### Shell Lace

CO 16 sts. P 1 row.

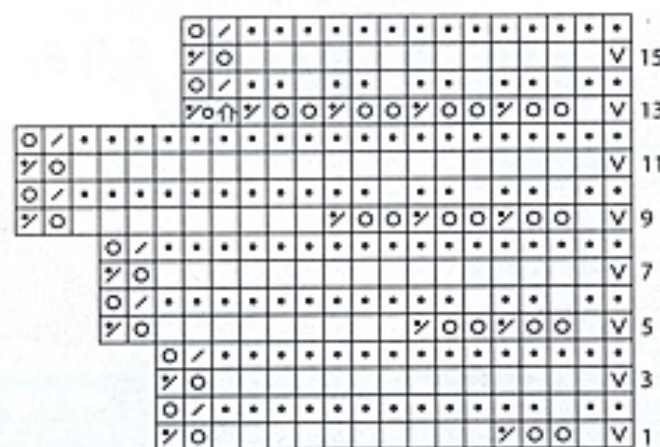
Work Rows 1–16 of Shell Stitch Chart until desired length, ending with Row 16.

K 1 row. BO all sts pwise.

### Finishing

Weave in ends.

Shell Stitch



16- to 22-st rep

Key

□ k on RS; p on WS

• p on RS; k on WS

∇ sl 1 pwise wyb

○ yo

/ k2tog on RS; p2tog on WS

∩ p2tog on RS; k2tog on WS

∩ pass sts 2–11, one at a time, over the 1st st on left needle, yo, p2tog—10 sts dec'd

Chart may be photocopied for personal use.



# SUSAN B. ANTHONY *and a Letter about Lace*

SUSAN STRAWN

**R**ELENTLESS ADVOCATE FOR WOMAN'S RIGHTS. Tireless speaker for women's suffrage. Lace enthusiast? According to a recently discovered letter (see sidebar, page 59), Susan Brownell Anthony's (1820–1906) reputation for leaving no detail unattended extended even to the lace that she wore.



Suffragist Susan B. Anthony wearing her signature lace collar and cuffs. Photograph by Frances Benjamin Johnston. Circa 1890. Library of Congress Frances Benjamin Johnston Collection, Washington, D.C. (LC-USZ62-83145).

*Photograph by Frances Benjamin Johnston and courtesy of the Library of Congress.*



The letter, dated April 7, 1898, and written in hasty cursive on letterhead from the Office of the President of the National American Woman Suffrage Association (NAWSA), is filled with emphatic underlining and inserted words that suggest a woman with pressing concerns and demands on her time. Raised in a Quaker family, Anthony had campaigned in 1852 to secure for married women the right to retain their own wages and guardianship of their children; had worked to abolish slavery during the Civil War (1861–1865); had, with women from nineteen states, founded the National Woman Suffrage Association in 1869, intending to add a constitutional amendment giving women the right to vote; and had been arrested in 1872 for casting a vote illegally. (Fined \$100, she refused to pay.)

The recipient of Anthony's letter was Rachel Foster Avery (1858–1919), corresponding secretary for NAWSA and a steadfast advocate for women's suffrage. The two had met at a suffrage convention in 1879, and now Anthony was "Aunt Susan" to the much younger Avery. When Rachel Foster left for Europe in 1883 to study abroad, Anthony had traveled with her but stayed in Great Britain to meet British feminists and lay plans for the first International Council of Women (ICW), much of which Avery would manage.

Hundreds of the letters written between Anthony and her suffragist colleagues have survived, including many between Avery and Anthony. Although mutual affection is evident in all their correspondence, the letters of Anthony and Avery were written primarily to plan meetings and travel, share concerns about funding, react to new technology (the typewriter!), lament defeats in the battle for women's suffrage, and on occasion discuss what to wear for photographs and public appearances. The letter of April 7, 1898, is unusual in that it deals almost entirely with Anthony's lace-embellished clothing. She frets about her dressmaker's resistance to using black lace and



her plan to remodel a cape that will require ripping out the back seam. Rather than risk ruining the cape, she has instructed the dressmaker to purchase new lace to trim it. As for the dressmaker's proposal to trim a dress with all-white handkerchief lace that Anthony considers "too tender & broken to be used," she proposes giving the lace to "namesake Julia" (most likely Avery's third daughter, named for her sister Julia Foster). She regrets that Avery

apparently has "ripped off" the black lace that was "so fine—so exquisite." Because both of her silk brocade dresses have black lace over white, her new plain black dress must not look like them. In conclusion, Anthony seems intent on passing responsibility to Avery to have her own seamstress carry out Anthony's instructions.

This concern about her wardrobe must have arisen by the prospect of Anthony's sailing for England the following month to lead the United States delegation to the ICW in London. Scorned decades earlier by reporters and public alike, Anthony would soon enter Westminster Hall welcomed by a sea of fluttering white handkerchiefs: the Chautauqua salute. Newspapers would now praise her femininity and intellect; lords and ladies would entertain her.

Anthony considered dress reform essential for the work toward woman's rights and suffrage. A few women began wearing bloomers—wide-legged Turkish trousers covered by a shorter skirt and named for its originator, Amelia Bloomer (1818–1894). Anthony held out until late in 1852, when she also cut her hair short. "I am in short skirts and trousers, and have spoken in Auburn!" she wrote to fellow suffragist Lucy Stone (1818–1893). The response was ridicule both in newspapers and in public. Her longtime colleague Elizabeth Cady Stanton (1815–1902), responded: "The cup of ridicule is greater than you can bear. . . . It is not wise, Susan, to use up so much energy and feeling in that way. You can put them to better use. I speak from experience." Although Anthony felt

Susan B. Anthony with Rachel Foster Avery, the young friend to whom she wrote the letter about lace in 1898. Photograph by Rice, Washington, D.C. 1890. Library of Congress Collection, Washington, D.C. (LC-USZ62-46707).

Photograph by Rice, Washington, D.C. and courtesy of the Library of Congress.



that the return to heavy layers of petticoats and long skirts spelled defeat, she complied with Stanton's advice. Eventually, she determined to concentrate on one goal alone: women's suffrage.

Perhaps Anthony's interest in fine lace and fashion eased her re-adoption of traditional Victorian dress. In her memoir, Stanton recalls Anthony's attention to dress when they first met at an abolitionist gathering: "There she stood with her good earnest face and genial smile, dressed in gray silk, hat and all the same color, relieved with pale blue ribbons, the perfection of neatness and sobriety." Certain Anthony-Avery letters mention her dressing her part for the suffrage movement. In 1897, Anthony writes that her velvet dress is "out of its camphor trunk &

airing, ready to go to Des Moines - - but won't the Pres. & Cor. Sec'y look rather stunning?" She also takes exception to the "ridiculously large" sleeves in a photograph that Avery had selected to be included in a Susan B. Anthony biography. Avery assured Anthony that she would have another photograph taken.

All her life, Anthony was fastidious about her appearance and aware of fashion. Perhaps it was because she was not a confident speaker despite her astounding record of public appearances, or perhaps it arose from the pain of public rejection for wearing the bloomer. Photographs show her keeping up with changing fashion silhouettes, even to the high standing collars and voluminous sleeves of the 1890s. Press and public alike recognized

## Transcript of Susan B. Anthony Letter

Office of the President, ROCHESTER, N.Y., April 7, 1899.  
Darling Rachel,

Yours of the 5<sup>th</sup> -  
personal word - is lovely & refreshing -  
Have I written you that my dress maker  
doesn't wish to use any black lace -  
- but would like very much to use  
the two ends of the cape - for revers -  
putting the rounded ends at the shoulders  
and bringing the lace down to the waist  
line - she held them up just as she would  
like to use <sup>them</sup> - but alas it would require  
the ripping out of the back of the cape -  
which she says will not hurt the cape a  
particle - that the parts can be sewed together  
again and make the cape exactly as nice  
as ever - but I do not like to have her do it.  
So - as she is going to New York on Sunday-  
night - I have told [her] get <sup>me</sup> such  
lace as she wants - to trim it with -  
& then I shall have it to leave to you -  
- dress & all together - - You see it will  
not do to use the cape - beautiful as it is -  
as a cape - because it would make my  
[trimming] of the new satin so nearly the  
same as that of the velvet - and <sup>though</sup> she

wants to have all white lace - she <sup>wishes</sup> to put it on  
in a very different style -

The cape is too lovely -exquisite- and  
I should fear all the time of making  
a break in it - The handkerchief  
border is beautiful - but too tender & broken  
to be used - It is just an heir-loom for the  
dear little namesake Julia! I am sorry  
you ripped off the black lace - Mrs. [Fullam]  
said she never saw any so fine  
-so exquisite- You see both of  
my brocade silks have black lace over  
white - so the new plain <sup>black</sup> must not  
be like them - So my dear - with  
just as much gratitude as my heart can  
give - It is best to take them all to you at S[R]

Lovingly as ever

Susan B. Anthony

—Manuscripts, Box 1, Archives and Special Collections,  
Dominican University; transcribed by Steven Szegedi,  
archivist, Dominican University, River Forest, Illinois

LEFT: Recto side of the letter about lace that Susan B. Anthony wrote to Rachel Foster Avery in 1898. Manuscripts, Box 1, Archives and Special Collections, Dominican University, River Forest, Illinois.

RIGHT: Verso side of the letter about lace that Susan B. Anthony wrote to Rachel Foster Avery in 1898. Manuscripts, Box 1, Archives and Special Collections, Dominican University, River Forest, Illinois.

Photographs courtesy of the author.





Having abandoned the cause of women's dress reform, Susan B. Anthony stands on the porch of her house at 17 Madison Street in Rochester, New York, wearing her customary black dress and lace collar.

Photograph by Frances Benjamin Johnston. 1900. Library of Congress  
Frances Benjamin Johnston Collection, Washington, D.C. (LC-USZ62-8760).

Photograph by Frances Benjamin Johnston and courtesy of the Library of Congress.

her trademark black dress trimmed with lace. With few exceptions, she wore black. Mormon women who aligned with NAWSA invited Anthony to Utah and presented her with a black silk dress, the fabric of which had been handwoven of silk raised in the Utah silk industry. (Avery succeeded in persuading her to have a garnet velvet dress made for special occasions.)

In each of her formal photographs, Anthony wears lace, most often as a ruffle at the collar. Except for her reference to handkerchief lace, none of her letters mentions specific types of lace. Handmade needlepoint lace and bobbin lace, especially for collars and cuffs, had been made since the sixteenth century, and by 1840, machines that could reproduce most traditional handmade-lace patterns made lace available and affordable to trim Anthony's black dresses.

In her travels throughout the United States and Europe, Anthony always carried an alligator purse (see sidebar, below) filled with speeches and pamphlets, along with a copy of the transcript of her 1873 trial for voting "illegally." More than just a tote, the purse represented her frustration at the lack of money—and therefore power—under the law for nineteenth-century married women. As early as November 1853, a diary entry reads, "Woman must have a purse of her own, & how can this be, so long as the wife is denied the right to her individual and joint earnings. Reflections like these, caused me to see and really feel that there was no true freedom for woman without the possession of all her property rights." Anthony's "purse of her own" came to symbolize a woman's right to financial independence. (The alligator bag may be seen at the Susan B. Anthony Museum & House in Rochester, New York.)

At the time of the April 7, 1898, letter, dress reform had run its course. Anthony



and other suffragists had long since abandoned it, having learned that dress reform actually created hostility to their cause. It appears that dress reform for women followed rather than led improvements in women's rights.

Newspaper reports late in her career refer to Anthony's feminine appearance. "Charmed by Miss Anthony's Femininity and Intellect" reads a headline by the London correspondent of the *Philadelphia Press* during the ICW. The people of England "find it hard to believe

from her neat figure that she was born in 1820 and had crossed the line into her 80th year." A reporter from St. Louis in 1895 comments on her attire: "She wore 'soft, black silk net, with its trimmings of little, narrow satin ribbons. About her wrists were the softest and daintiest of white crepe lisse [silk gauze] ruffles."

By 1898, Anthony was deeply concerned about finding younger women to carry on her work. In 1900, she presided over her last NAWSA convention, and Carrie Chapman Catt (1859–1947) succeeded her as president. Although it still bothered her that her clothing received as much or more attention from journalists as her politics, lace accompanied her through these final appearances. The journalist who chronicled her farewell speech concluded in admiration, "... [S]he raised her thin, white hand, with delicate lace falling around it." ♦

## Susan B. Anthony and the JUMP-ROPE RHYME

Miss Lulu had a baby, she called him tiny Tim.  
She put him in the bathtub, to see if he could swim.  
He drank up all the water! He ate up all the soap!  
He tried to swallow the bathtub, but it wouldn't go down his throat!!  
Call for the doctor!  
Call for the nurse!  
Call for the lady with the alligator purse!  
"Mumps!" said the doctor. "Measles!" said the nurse.  
"Vote!!" said the lady with the alligator purse!!

—A children's jump-rope rhyme recorded by the press in California during one of Susan B. Anthony's suffrage campaigns

**ABOUT THE AUTHOR.** Susan Strawn is an associate professor at Dominican University in River Forest, Illinois. She was the staff artist and photostylist for *Interweave* until 2001, now serves on *PieceWork's* editorial advisory panel, and contributes stories and knitting designs to the magazine. *Interweave* produced her video, *Knits of Yore: A Close Look at Some Curious, Perplexing, and Estimable Knitted Objects from the Past 200 Years*, in 2011. She thanks Steven Szegedi, archivist at Dominican University, who discovered and transcribed Susan B. Anthony's letter about lace.



beg—begin(s); beginning  
BO—bind off  
CC—contrasting color  
ch—chain  
cir—circular  
cn—cable needle  
CO—cast on  
cont—continue(s); continuing  
dec(s) (d)—decrease(s); decreased;  
decreasing  
dpm—double-pointed needle(s)  
foll—follow(s); following  
inc(s) (i)—increase(s); increased;  
increasing  
k—knit  
k1b—knit 1 in back of stitch  
k1f&b—knit into the front and back of  
the same stitch—1 stitch increased  
k2b—knit 2 in back of next 2 stitches  
kwise—knitwise; as if to knit  
k2tog—knit 2 stitches together  
k3tog—knit 3 stitches together  
k5tog—knit 5 stitches together  
lp(s)—loop(s)  
m(s)—marker(s)  
MC—main color  
M1—make one (increase)  
M1k—increase 1 by knitting into the  
front and then the back of the same  
stitch before slipping it off the left-  
hand needle  
M1p—increase 1 by purling into the front

and then the back of the same stitch  
before slipping it off the left-hand  
needle  
M1l—(make 1 left) lift the running thread  
between the stitch just worked and the  
next stitch from front to back, and knit  
into the back of this thread  
M1r—(make 1 right) lift the running  
thread between the stitch just worked  
and the next stitch from back to front,  
and knit into the front of this thread  
p—purl  
p2tog—purl 2 stitches together  
p3tog—purl 3 stitches together  
p4tog—purl 4 stitches together  
p5tog—purl 5 stitches together  
p7tog—purl 7 stitches together  
patt—pattern(s)  
pm—place marker  
prev—previous  
psso—pass slipped stitch over  
p2sso—pass 2 slipped stitches over  
pwise—purlwise; as if to purl  
rem—remain(s); remaining  
rep(s)—repeat(s); repeating  
rev St st—reverse stockinette stitch (p  
right-side rows; k wrong-side rows)  
rnd(s)—round(s)  
RS—right side  
sk—skip  
sl—slip  
sl st—slip(ped) stitch

sp(s)—space(s)  
ssk—slip 1 knitwise, slip 1 knitwise, knit 2  
slipped stitches together through back  
loops (decrease)  
sssk—slip 3 stitches one at a time as if to  
knit, insert the point of the left needle  
into front of slipped stitches, and knit  
these 3 stitches together through their  
back loops  
ssp—slip 1 knitwise, slip 1 knitwise, purl  
2 slipped stitches together through  
back loops (decrease)  
st(s)—stitch(es)  
St st—stockinette stitch  
tbl—through back loop  
tch—turning chain  
tog—together  
WS—wrong side  
wyb—with yarn in back  
wyf—with yarn in front  
yo—yarn over  
yo twice—bring yarn forward, wrap it  
counterclockwise around the right  
needle, and bring it forward again  
to make two wraps around the right  
needle  
\*—repeat starting point  
( )—alternate measurements and/or  
instructions  
[ ]—work bracketed instructions a  
specified number of times

## TECHNIQUES

### Invisible (Provisional) Cast-On

Place a loose slipknot on needle held in your right hand. Hold waste yarn next to slipknot and around left thumb; hold working yarn over left index finger.

\*Bring needle forward under waste yarn, over working yarn, grab a loop of working yarn (Figure 1), then bring needle to the front, over both yarns, and grab a second loop (Figure 2). Repeat from \*. When you're ready to work in the opposite direction, pick out waste yarn to expose live stitches.

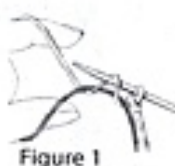


Figure 1

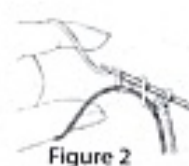


Figure 2

### Kitchener Stitch (Grafting)

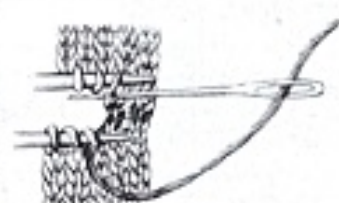
Step 1: Bring threaded needle through front stitch as if to purl and leave stitch on needle.

Step 2: Bring threaded needle through back stitch as if to knit and leave stitch on needle.

Step 3: Bring threaded needle through first front stitch as if to knit and slip this stitch off needle. Bring threaded needle through next front stitch as if to purl and leave stitch on needle.

Step 4: Bring threaded needle through first back stitch as if to purl (as illustrated), slip this stitch off, bring needle through next back stitch as if to knit, leave this stitch on needle.

Repeat Steps 3 and 4 until no stitches remain on needles.



### Long-Tail Cast-On

Also called the continental method, this cast-on creates a firm, elastic edge that's appropriate for most projects. This method is worked with one needle and two ends of yarn, and it places stitches on the right needle. The resulting edge is smooth on one side (the side facing you as you work) and knotted or bumpy on the other (the side facing away from you as you work). Most knitters choose to designate the smooth side as the "right" side.

Leaving a long tail, make a slipknot and place on a needle held in your right hand. Place thumb and index finger of your left hand between the yarn ends so that the working yarn is around your index finger and the tail is around your thumb, secure the ends with your other three fingers, and twist your wrist so that your palm faces upwards, making a V of yarn around your thumb and index finger (Figure 1). \*Bring needle up through loop on thumb (Figure 2), grab the first strand around index finger with needle, and go back down through loop on thumb (Figure 3). Drop loop off thumb and, placing thumb back in the V configuration, tighten resulting stitch on needle (Figure 4). Repeat from \*.



Figure 1



Figure 2



Figure 3



Figure 4